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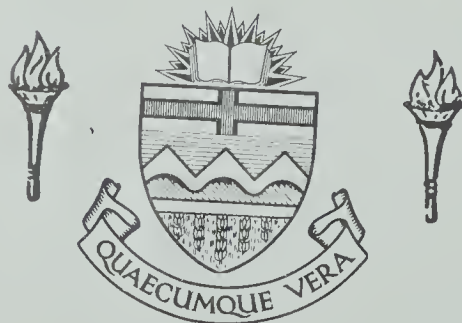
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
THE KOMSOMOL. SOCIALIZATION AND MOBILIZATION

BY

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A THESIS

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The Undersigned certify that they have read,  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the establishment, history, and activities of the Komsomol and focuses on the methods which it employed on behalf of regime-dictated goals and on the role which it came to play in Soviet society. Beginning with a general sketch of socialization methods in the Soviet Union, the thesis traces the history of the Komsomol and then outlines some of the major problems faced by the Party and Komsomol leadership in their attempt to control the rebelliousness of post-Stalin youth.

It was found that, from the very beginning, the Komsomol was conceived as an organization through which the Party hoped to gain political control over youth. The Komsomol, too, was to serve as a recruitment agency for the Party and to train prospective Party members.

The Party's approach to socializing youth relied heavily upon organizational control and the application of various external pressures, the most important of which were that complex of agitational, legal, political, social, and economic stimuli involved in mobilization. The Soviet leadership wanted above all to commit youth and involve them in the building of a new society. Mobilization thus



served a twofold purpose: it involved youth and taught them regime-desired qualities. This did not mean that political education and indoctrination were neglected, but rather that they were conducted in the form of a campaign.

After examining the Komsomol's role in the campaign against hooligans and parasites, it was found that mobilizing tactics were not very successful in either stimulating the bored Komsomol rank-and-file or improving the organization's image to non-members. One encouraging sign, however, was the Komsomol's involvement with public opinion polls. The use of social science surveys seems to have promoted a change of technique, both for the Komsomol and the Party's treatment of it. Whether this will occasion a change in the Komsomol's use of mobilizing tactics, however, remains to be seen. Mobilization is still seen as a very important method for achieving current economic, social, and political tasks.





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## PREFACE

In addition to the family, the school, the mass communications network, and other youth organizations (the Pioneers and the Little Octobrists), the Komsomol serves as an important agency for the political socialization of youth. Being the sole organization for "youth" between the ages of 14 and 28, it is also greatly concerned with mobilizing its membership for current social and economic tasks. These two functions, socialization and mobilization, have at times been so intertwined that they defy separate definition, at least in so far as the Komsomol and Party officialdom have approached them.

Since its establishment in 1918, the Komsomol has been carefully "guided" and controlled by the Party. Having a monopoly to organize youth, it has evolved into a mass organization, rife with bureaucratic stultification and membership indifference. In its formative years, it played an important political role, but was forced to relinquish this with the rise of Stalin. In the process, its role in political socialization assumed a formalized, administrative character. The Komsomol became increasingly useful as an agency for the mobilization of youth for regime-promoted tasks.



The Soviet leadership, suspicious of spontaneous, independent socialization agencies, increasingly relied upon indoctrinational methods of socialization, such as, for example, oral agitation and mobilization through centrally-controlled organizations. The problem, as understood by the leadership, was one of gaining involvement on the part of the young. It was probably felt that official campaigns and the propaganda surrounding them would generate sufficient commitment, if not enthusiasm, to ensure some modicum of conformity. Forced participation was to be a method not only of recruitment, but also of socialization.

The foregoing is not to suggest that mobilization was conceived as a panacea for the problems of socialization and recruitment per se. Mobilization, after all, was also needed for the building of a new society. This latter function was undoubtedly more explicit and more obvious to both the leadership and the population.

Mobilization methods, however, have continued to form the basis of the regime's approach to the Komsomol's role in society. The Komsomol certainly plays a significant role in political indoctrination and education, but its approach and its relationship to youth has long suffered from mobilization tactics: it tends to view success in terms of the numbers of those involved rather than their motivation. This in itself poses grave problems for its effectiveness.



This study examines some of the basic problems faced by the regime and the Komsomol in their attempt to manipulate and control youth. While many of these problems seem inherent in the nature of the Komsomol as an organization and in its close relationship to the Party, certain insights can be gained by examining the response of the Soviet leadership to these problems.

A study such as this is of course restricted by the lack of sources available in the West. It is impossible, for example, to give a complete picture of the rural and nationality problems encountered by the Komsomol. Since this thesis focuses on the top-level decisions within the Party and Komsomol hierarchy and on their impact in the urban centers, the lack of available material in rural and ethnic areas is not necessarily a limitation.

The sources used in this thesis rely to some extent upon Soviet newspapers and periodicals. As such, some of the interpretations and generalizations are necessarily limited to the latter's content. This does not seem entirely unjustified since the Soviet press is an important and conscious method of socialization and mobilization.

I would like to express my appreciation for the helpful comments and constructive criticism of Professor M. E. Mote, who patiently read the many drafts of this thesis. Needless to say, my conclusions and shortcomings remain (sometimes stubbornly) my own.





## CHAPTER I

### SOCIALIZATION IN THE SOVIET UNION

Any society, whether primitive or complex, develops some method of transmitting its values and behavioral norms from generation to generation. This process varies from one society to another, depending upon the level of social and political complexity. In a primitive society, for instance, in which there is little or no well-defined political subsystem, the transmission of societal norms takes place largely within the family or tribal group. The family is also a major socialization agency in more complex societies, but the functional differentiation of labor and the existence of a well-defined political subsystem necessitates the learning of more sophisticated qualities later in life.

The socialization process is a learning process. The child enters society as a stranger to everything except his family. Since his initial learning experience takes place within the family environment, his successful adjustment to the system as a whole depends largely upon his parents' relationship to the system. As he grows older, he is subjected to other socialization agencies -- the school, the peer-group, social organizations -- which set their own



rules and exert their own authority. If their behavioral standards do not coincide with what the child has learned in the family, he may be faced with a crisis in attempting to adjust to conflicting sets of demands and allegiances. But as one scholar of the socialization process has commented, "the relative influence of parental norms declines as peers and other agencies exert their influence on the growing individual."<sup>1</sup>

As the child matures, he becomes more and more aware of the demands placed upon him by the political system. He is expected to give allegiance, active support, and to become at least somewhat involved in the functioning of the system. This process of "politicization" or political socialization begins early in life, even before the child fully understands what he is doing,<sup>2</sup> and becomes increasingly important during adolescence. "Political socialization refers to the learning process by which the political norms and behaviors acceptable to an ongoing system

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<sup>1</sup>H. Hyman, Political Socialization (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 81.

<sup>2</sup>"In many ways a child born into a system is like an immigrant to it. But where he differs is in the fact that he has never been socialized to any other kind of system. . . . He learns to like the government before he knows what it is." David Easton and Jack Dennis, "The Child's Image of Government", Political Socialization: Its Role in the Political Process, The Annals [American Academy of Political and Social Science (hereafter AAPSS)], Vol. 361 (September, 1965), pp. 56, 57.



are transmitted from generation to generation."<sup>3</sup>

The political socialization process involves two kinds of political learning: deliberate and incidental. The deliberate, or explicit part, consists of formalized teaching and takes place largely within the school or family. It might be compared to Plato's concept of civic education. To western scholars, most of the norm internalization goes on imperceptibly and casually and is thus incidental, that is, unknown to both teacher and learner.<sup>4</sup> Observation, overhearing, imitation, and the life experience itself are seen as the basic elements in this type of learning. The entire process operates at two levels: the community (and cultural transmission); and the individual (and the formation of the political self).<sup>5</sup>

Political socialization serves three fundamental purposes: it transmits and maintains a particular political culture; transforms it; or creates a new one.<sup>6</sup> The particular method (or lack of one) by which these purposes are

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<sup>3</sup>Roberta Sigel, "Assumptions About the Learning of Political Values", Political Socialization: Its Role in the Political Process, The Annals [AAPSS], Vol. 361 (September, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>5</sup>Richard E. Dawson and Kenneth Prewitt, Political Socialization (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969), p. 13.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28.



achieved, or by which it is felt they will be achieved, is one important indicator of the differences between political cultures. In the United States or Canada, for instance, the transmission and maintenance of a political culture is largely uncoordinated, whereas in the Soviet Union it is a highly-centralized, coordinated, and self-conscious process. As such, politicization in the Soviet Union is institutionalized: it is sought through formal, organizational channels.

The institutionalization of political socialization (and of socialization in general) was in many ways the result of the problems faced by the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Revolution. The new Soviet state was faced first and foremost with the problem of survival. To survive, it had to transform the political allegiances of the vast majority of the population. This being overwhelmingly a political problem, socialization was to be achieved through political means. The regime was naturally distrustful of the traditional means of transmitting societal values, and was determined to destroy them and to set up new socialization channels whose political loyalty was assured by organizational subordination. The socialization effort (which was also a political one) in the early years was conducted along two fronts: the attempt to break up the family and the school system (and all "relics" of the past), and the promotion of a self-imposed, "class-conscious" set of ethical standards





deriving from Marxist doctrine and the necessities of the moment.

Above all, the 1920s were an era of experimentation. The socialization process was reversed: children, indoctrinated by the regime and full of enthusiasm for the future, were expected to transmit the required values to their parents. Some Soviet theoreticians even suggested that the family, like the state, would wither away.<sup>7</sup> For a time, this was fostered by the state: free love, instant divorce, and abortion gained official sanction, if not approval. Similar disruptions occurred within the school system.<sup>8</sup>

It was economic reorganization, however, which lay at the base of the fundamental political and social changes promised by the Bolshevik Revolution. The latter promised to build a new, better society in which fulfillment and abundance would be assured for all. These goals were, of course, not the only ones which a communist society was to achieve, but they were basic elements of the perceived

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<sup>7</sup>Although Soviet theoreticians went considerably beyond Engels on this question, Marx and Engels did occasionally speak quite plainly of abolishing the family. See Alex Inkeles, Social Change in Soviet Russia (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), Chapter 11, especially pp. 214-218, and H. Kent Geiger, The Family in Soviet Russia (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 25.

<sup>8</sup>For a more detailed examination of disruptions in the school system, see Ina Schlesinger, The Pioneer Organization: The Evolution of Citizenship Education in the Soviet Union (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1967), Chapter III.



future utopia. It is significant to note that both fulfillment and abundance are defined in terms of work: in the Soviet context, man achieves his physical and mental fulfillment through labor; and material abundance is one of its derivatives. Seen from this perspective, the mobilization of the population for the pursuit of economic goals was not only an invaluable method of creating and maintaining desired political and social goals, but also an absolute necessity for the building of a new economic base. As such, economic mobilization was seen as a key concept in the socialization process and as a method in the political socialization process.

One of the basic functions of the state-controlled socialization agencies (such as the Komsomol) was thus one of keeping the population in a perpetual state of mobilization,<sup>9</sup> especially for economic purposes. Stalin's scheme of building "socialism in one country" required rapid development and was to be achieved through political means. The notion of "catching-up" to more industrial societies thus gave economic mobilization great political significance, which would of necessity continue to be stressed, irrespective of its perceived success or failure as a medium for socialization. This did not mean that propaganda and

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<sup>9</sup>Jeremy R. Azrael, "Soviet Union", in James S. Coleman, ed., Education and Political Development (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 235.



political education were not seen as important elements in creating and maintaining a desired set of social values. On the contrary, they were considered of extreme significance. Their application and "message", however, depended upon the construct supplied by the economic necessities of the moment. The Soviet leadership no doubt felt that agrarian attitudes could be changed more quickly by imposing a compulsory value system from above -- a value system which found its most obvious expression in the examples set by a hard core of enthusiastic "young builders" of a new society.

It was realized from the very beginning that youth had to be brought into the building of a new society. This was to be partially achieved through recruitment into controlled youth organizations. The youth program that developed out of the system of youth organizations was not necessarily aimed at making a "new man" but rather in involving youth in the making of a new system (which, of course, required the development of a new industrial man). Both elements were intertwined, and both were to be achieved self-consciously. Socialization and economic mobilization were not only urgent concerns for the political leadership but were also felt to be mutually reinforcing, so long as they were carefully controlled. Youth organizations thus existed for a prescribed purpose. They existed not for



youth, but for the state.

At present, organizations for youth begin at the age of seven, when the child is eligible for entry into the Little Octobrists [Oktiabrista].<sup>10</sup> Supervised and directed by the school teacher, this organization exposes the child to the symbols of life in the Soviet Union. Even at this early age, he is given small tasks to perform so as to teach him responsibility and respect for accomplishments. The experience gained is designed to prepare the child for entry into the Young Pioneers.

The Young Pioneer Organization is also based in the school and attempts to enroll all between the ages of 10 and 14. Children are taught to look upon membership with respect and awe. The applicant must take an oath of allegiance, usually at a solemn public ceremony attended by his parents, teachers, and important local officials. This is intended to symbolize his entry into communist society. The Pioneers are considered the "third shift" [tret'ia smena], following the Komsomol and the Party.

The Pioneers are controlled mainly by educational officials and the Komsomol, in conjunction with the Party. Since 1957, they have had their own Central Council, which

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<sup>10</sup>Established in 1924, it drew its name from the fact that its youngest members were the same age as the Revolution. As this thesis deals primarily with the Komsomol, other socialization agencies such as the school, family, and other youth groups are dealt with only briefly.







is subordinate to both the Komsomol and Party Central Committee. The basic Pioneer unit is the link [zveno] which comprises all the members in one class and which the teacher guides as part of the classroom duties. Komsomol participation is required in arranging and directing extracurricular activities and in staffing the senior positions in the all-school brigade [druzhina] as well as much of the Central Council.

The Pioneer Organization stresses the responsibility of the "collective" and fosters social obligation. Emphasis is early placed upon hatred for enemies, a scientific world outlook, and a communist "attitude toward labor".

The organization that is of most concern to the Party is the Komsomol (All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth). Membership is open to anyone between the ages of 14 and 28 who obeys the rules, pays the membership dues, and fulfills the obligations. Composed of 25 million youths, it seeks to instill in all youth the qualities demanded by the Party.

Its organizational structure parallels the Party's, both hierarchically and numerically. There are Komsomol obkoms, raikoms, Central Committees, and Audit Commissions. It has always been officially subordinate to the Party, a fact which is stated in both the Party and Komsomol Statutes.

As a mass organization, the Komsomol serves the important function of mobilizing youth to fulfill Party



directives. It has helped in collectivization, industrialization, the settlement of the Virgin Lands and the Far East, and in massive construction projects, to name but a few.

It also serves an educational function in the direction of the Young Pioneers, the staffing of the adult political indoctrination courses, and constant agitation among the young. A steady stream of ideological propaganda is maintained through its vast newspaper, magazine, radio, and television network. It must set an example of "communist morality" in its attitude to work and leisure.

The functions that the Komsomol have performed have varied from period to period, depending on the immediate political and economic necessities. One major concern of the youth program has certainly been the mobilization of youth, especially adolescents, for desired campaigns. This type of activity has always been considered as not only necessary but also successful, in terms of both socialization and recruitment.

As the official purveyor of an imposed youth culture, the Komsomol also serves the negative function of preventing any spontaneous, and potentially dangerous, youth subculture from developing. In a system requiring the perpetual mobilization of youth, a youth culture must not be too different from the adult culture.

Despite its deliberate program of political indoctrination, propaganda, and education, the Komsomol's role



in political socialization is primarily indirect, if not incidental, in that it serves to smooth over, through example and peer-group pressure, the difficulties encountered by the adolescent in adjusting to the realities of economic life. The basic socialization effort is made within the family, the schools, and the other youth organizations. The Komsomol is also a useful screening and recruitment agency for the Communist Party and is thus partly composed of youths whose primary concern lies in the desire for personal advancement.

The Komsomol's most fundamental contribution, however, lies in mobilizing youth and in cajoling or forcing youth to accept and adjust to the economic realities of life in a communist society. This is above all a process of economic socialization, which includes, of course, the shaping of political and social qualities requisite with it.

THIS thesis, while it examines some of the general and chronic problems of the Komsomol, addresses itself mainly to top-level decisions within the Komsomol and the Party and examines the methods by which these decisions were implemented. It is therefore concerned with the regime's interpretation of youth problems and its approach to solving and controlling them. It is felt that the regime's approach provides some insight into how



socialization is perceived in the Soviet Union, what it hopes to achieve, and how this has affected the evolution and functioning of the Komsomol organization.





## CHAPTER II

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE KOMSOMOL

Although the Bolsheviks had always been interested in the recruitment of youth into their ranks, they did not attempt to set up a separate youth organization, officially linked to their Party, until after the October Revolution. This was in part due to the clandestine nature of their activities and Party organization, which compelled them to remain a small, tight-knit, and homogeneous group. Many Party members, as well, were youths. It did not seem necessary or beneficial to set up a separate organization for youth.

Lenin and his Party, however, early recognized the importance of attracting youth to their movement. In 1903, Lenin introduced a Resolution at the Second Party Congress "On the Attitudes Towards Student Youth". He urged students to work out an "integral and consistent" socialist world outlook and to coordinate their practical activity with the plans of the Social Democratic Labor Party [i.e., the Bolshevik faction].<sup>1</sup> Separate youth organizations were neither

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<sup>1</sup>V. I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961), VI: 471; see also his 0 molodezhi (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1966), p. 119.



advocated nor desired, as they might compete with the Party.

A number of spontaneous youth organizations sprang up after the February 1917 revolution. Many of these groups, such as the "Work and Light" [Trud i svet] group organized by Shevtsov in the spring of 1917, were primarily devoted to the improvement of social, cultural, or recreational facilities for their worker membership.<sup>2</sup> They were essentially apolitical in that their program was not directly aimed at political activity, which was to be left up to the adults. The youths that did band together did so for escape from harsh working conditions, not for political action; in short, they organized for personal, not public, purposes. The danger to the Bolsheviks lay in the fact that these groups would not be automatically committed to the particular aims of any future political conflict. But in the ensuing process of trying to depersonalize the goals of these groups through strict institutional control and imposed aims, -- or as Kassof calls it, "the collectivization of interpersonal relationships"<sup>3</sup> -- the Bolsheviks

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<sup>2</sup>"Work and Light" was a Petrograd organization. Its recreational and cultural aims are discussed in S. I. Ploss, "From Youthful Zeal to Middle Age", Problems of Communism [Hereafter PoC], VII: 5 (September-October, 1958), pp. 8-9. See also R. T. Fisher, Jr., A Pattern for Soviet Youth (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup>Allen Kassof, "Youth Organizations and the Adjustment of Soviet Adolescents", in Cyril E. Black, ed., The Transformation of Russian Society: Aspects of Social Change Since 1861 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 486-491.



would be increasingly faced with the dilemma between the need to mobilize youth and the need to control the initiative through which this mobilization was to be achieved.

The Bolshevik Party, in mid-1917, was hardly in a position to deal with the development of youth organizations. Concerned by the latter's independence, they wanted to influence and informally control the various aims and activities of these organizations, but they were unwilling to make them an appendage of the Party. At the VI Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks), held from July 26 to August 3, 1917, Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, argued that youth could be induced to play an active role only within their own organizations.<sup>4</sup> Any links to the Party were to be informal and merely "spiritual". This policy of patronizing neutrality" was reflected in a Resolution of the Congress which called upon the Party to encourage "working youth to create self-standing [samostoiatel'nyi] organizations, not organizationally subordinated, but only spiritually linked, to the party." The Party, it seemed, was only to trust "working youth". At the same time, however,

. . . the party must strive to see that these organizations from their very beginning acquire a socialist character . . . so that their local sections might have as their chief goal the development of class

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<sup>4</sup>Ploss, op. cit., p. 9 [my italics].



consciousness in proletarian youth through the propaganda of the ideas of socialism . . . and at the same time [through] the protection of the economic, political [and] legal interests of young workers.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the Party's initial approach to the problem of gaining trustworthy members for a future youth organization assumed that only working youth, per se, were suitable for receiving the Party's consideration. Taken to its logical conclusion, this implied that other youth organizations, however revolutionary, were not to receive guidance, and thus official approval, from the Party. The insistence that youth organizations, "from their very beginning", be socialist in character implied that a socialist character could somehow be imposed upon an organization from above or could be achieved through a selective process (which further implied the existence of someone who selects). Furthermore, the Resolution gave youth organizations an important task in socialization. This was to be achieved through the propaganda of ideas (i.e. socialism) and practical tasks (i.e. protection of interests). Even at this early stage, then, the Bolsheviks had worked out a series of propositions on how youth were to be cajoled, persuaded, and even forced into accepting the desired values.

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<sup>5</sup>KPSS o Komsomole i molodezhi, Sbornik resolutsii i reshenii s'ezdov, konferentsii i postanovlenii TsK, 1917-1958 (2nd ed.; Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1958), pp. 3-4 [my italics].







Basically, this was to be achieved through the fostering of "correct" organizational objectives, and through education. Organization and education were the key concepts. The argument seems to run as follows: only proletarian youth may establish youth organizations whose socialist character will develop class consciousness through propaganda, thereby forming a hard core of "example-setters" whose future expansion will eventually draw in all youth, once they have been converted. The Party's role in this process, as it officially stated, was to be restricted to guidance.

The concrete application of this "guidance", however, that is, the task of encouraging youth to set up their own organizations and at the same time of guaranteeing that these organizations were socialist in character, demanded a link between youth organizations and the Party that was much more than "spiritual". The aforementioned "Work and Light" organization, for example, was infiltrated by a group of young Bolsheviks under the leadership of Oskar Ryvkin (who was later to be an important Komsomol leader). Ryvkin and his followers charged "Work and Light" with "political and social unawareness" and proceeded to set up a rival group, the "Socialist League of Working Youth, within its ranks.<sup>6</sup> This latter body, through propaganda

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<sup>6</sup>Ploss, op. cit., p. 9; Fisher, op. cit., pp. 5-6. Merle Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled (revised edition;



and Party guidance, eventually grew so strong that "Work and Light" fell apart by its own abolition within a few months.<sup>7</sup> The Party was also not averse to such direct links with youth as the "Youth League" of its Moscow Committee, although it officially avoided them.<sup>8</sup>

The most important organization, nevertheless, was the "Socialist League of Working Youth".<sup>9</sup> By the end of 1917, its membership stood at 15,000 and it had branches in Moscow, Petrograd, and surrounding cities.<sup>10</sup> It was the major instrument of the Party's attempts, throughout the summer of 1918, to establish a single league of youth which would unite all

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Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), claims that V. Alekseev was the main Bolshevik infiltrator (p. 285). Ploss and Fisher do not mention him.

<sup>7</sup>Ryvkin's organization was formed in July, 1917. "Work and Light" dissolved itself on August 31, 1917; Ploss, loc cit. The Socialist League of Working Youth was strong enough to hold an all-city Conference in August of 1918; see A. M. Murav'ev, "Rozhdenie komsomola", V edinom stroiu (Leningrad: Izd. Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1968), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Fisher, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>9</sup>Note how the name itself implies a different perspective from "Work and Light". It reflects the principles set forward by the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress: that is, it is a Socialist League of Working Youth.

<sup>10</sup>The membership figure is taken from Fainsod, op. cit., p. 285. The total membership of the Komsomol, later to be formed from this and other groups, was only 22,100 in November, 1918. The Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia [hereinafter BSE] (2nd. ed.; Moscow, 1951), IX: 333, lists the various city organizations affiliated with the League.



the other minor organizations.<sup>11</sup> Finally, in November of 1918, a Congress of various youth organizations convened in Moscow, sponsored by the Socialist League of Working Youth and the Party.<sup>12</sup> This Congress marked the official establishment of the Komsomol (a Russian acronym composed of the first syllables of the Communist League of Youth [Kom-munisticheskii Soiuz Molodezhi]; in 1924, it was expanded to All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth [Vsesoiuznii Leninskii Kommunisticheskii Soiuz Molodezhi] or VLKSM, a name which it holds today).

The influence of the Party is illustrated by the political affiliation of the delegates to this Congress: of 176 delegates, 86 were Party members, 38 were "sympathizers", 45 were non-Party, and 7 had miscellaneous affiliations.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>The League's name was apparently changed, to indicate the admission of peasants, to the "Socialist League of Working and Peasant Youth" sometime during 1918. An organizational bureau was established by the Party in August of 1918 for the purpose of calling an All-Russian Congress of youth. The Socialist League was prominent in its work. BSE, IX: 332; Murav'ev, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>12</sup>Current Soviet sources take great care to point to the leading role the Party took in the development of the Komsomol and to the enthusiastic response this role received. See ibid., pp. 3-4 for his treatment of the role Pravda supposedly played. For an example of the distortion of Komsomol history, see Komshalov's article on the 45th anniversary of the Komsomol, "S dnem rozhdeniia", Molodoi kommunist, No. 10 (October, 1963), pp. 3-8, in which he claims that the first Komsomol Congress addressed its first words to the Party. This was clearly not the case. For further treatment on the distortion of Komsomol history, see P. Kruzhin, "The Periodical Press", Bulletin, XI: 1 (January, 1964), pp. 43-51.

<sup>13</sup>Murav'ev, op. cit., p. 8. A. Avtorkhanov, "A Brief





The organizational structure of the Komsomol, moreover, paralleled that of the Party. Top positions went to Party members: all 15 members, and 6 of the 7 alternates of the first Central Committee were Party members.<sup>14</sup> The Party, nevertheless, continued to stress that the Komsomol organization was self-standing [samostoiatel'nyi]. Officially, the Party was only to be a helper in establishing primary organizations, in providing agitators, and in creating educational clubs.<sup>15</sup>

A minor, though important, shift of emphasis was now evident in the Party's policy. The Komsomol was visualized -- much as the Pioneers and the Little Octobrists were to be later -- as the base of a recruitment pyramid having the Party at its apex. The Komsomol was to be ". . . communist in its aims and tactics" and was to ". . . unite the wide masses of working youth, and prepare for the latter a conscious army of fighters for communism." The Party went on to describe youth as ". . . our faithful helper in the present and our hope for the future. . . . The Russian

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History of the Komsomol", Soviet Youth: Twelve Komsomol Histories (Munich: Institute for the Study of the USSR, 1959), p. 9, lists 88 communists.

<sup>14</sup>Ploss, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>15</sup>This was expressed in a Party circular letter distributed to the delegates at the Congress, KPSS o Komso-  
mole. . . ., op. cit., p. 5.





Communist League of Youth is the school, in which new, conscious communists will be prepared."<sup>16</sup>

As in the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress, stress was laid upon propaganda and educational work. But no mention was made of protecting the interests of the young workers. Instead, the Komsomol was called upon to defend the legal and economic interests of the socialist revolution.<sup>17</sup> It was perhaps rightly felt that the Komsomol, in protecting the rights of young workers, would achieve a *raison d'etre* distinct from its officially-promoted function as a socializing and recruiting agency.

Despite the structural control exercised by Party members, the Komsomol rank-and-file were still free to criticize and discuss current problems. Although the first Congress expressed its solidarity with the Party, the delegates declared that the League was an independent organization.<sup>18</sup> Vociferous discussion surrounded the question of whether or not to call the League "communist". It was finally resolved that the organization was not to be a league of communist

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<sup>16</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup>On the role of the unions and labor discipline in the country at this time, see Robert V. Daniels, The Conscience of the Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), Chapter V. The question of jurisdiction over young workers was still a matter of controversy in 1928, when Komsomol'skaia pravda and Trud engaged in polemics, ibid., p. 346.

<sup>18</sup>Fisher, op. cit., pp. 10-11.



youth, but rather a communist league of youth. The distinction was important, because the former implied that the League would only be open to communists, whereas the latter implied that non-communist youth could be admitted so long as their behaviour conformed to the principles set by the League. The League was to be open to the "broad masses of still uncommitted worker and peasant youth." This in effect meant that it would have a great potential for expansion. It was soon discovered, however, that the Party was reluctant to allow this to happen. A mass organization would be much more difficult for it to control.

Closer Komsomol-Party ties were effected in August 1919 in a joint Party and Komsomol Central Committee resolution which stated that the Komsomol Central Committee was now directly subordinate to the Party's and that local Komsomol organs were to work under the direction of local Party committees. In addition, all Party members under the age of 20 were to serve actively as Komsomol members. The Party also recommended the establishment of Party "fractions" [fraktsii] in most Komsomol organizations. Although the Party still cautioned against "wardship" over the League, it now described the League as autonomous rather than self-standing.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in less than a year after its formation, the organizational structure of the Komsomol was clearly under the guidance of the Party.

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<sup>19</sup>KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., op. cit., pp. 33-35.



Party guidance, however, was not as yet Party control. Some Komsomol organizations seemed to have a different idea of their role. Many local units sought to set up other organizations which would only be indirectly affiliated with the national one. One such organization was promoted by a Moscow Komsomol Committee and Party member, Dunaievskii, who wanted to establish separate youth sections in trade unions to protect the interests of the young workers.<sup>20</sup> The Party answered that these organizations would set the young workers against their older comrades and that this would amount to "splitting" and fractionalism among youth.<sup>21</sup> The same lot befell other proposals, such as the establishment of Young Proletarian Homes in which youth would come for educational and recreational purposes.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the Party attacked the establishment of non-Komsomol gatherings in the Ukraine.<sup>23</sup>

The whole problem of separate, though affiliated, youth organizations was linked to the question of whether

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<sup>20</sup>Fisher, op. cit., pp. 22-25; Ploss, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>21</sup>The Party replied in the form of a letter-directive to its local committees. Dunaievskii was expelled from the Party for six months -- a strong measure at that time. See KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>22</sup>Fisher, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 24.



the Komsomol should be the only organization for youth or whether it should be a coordinating body which would foster and direct local or functional organizations under its aegis. The latter was probably what Dunaieskii and others had envisioned. But the Party could not as yet fully control the Komsomol itself, much less a broader organization of local power constellations which would only be linked to the Party through the Komsomol. The Party therefore outlawed the idea of local affiliates to the Komsomol. By disallowing local or functional groups to organize, the Party no doubt felt that it could retain the Komsomol's potential for becoming a single, centralized, mass organization (i.e., by the eventual loosening of admission restrictions).

By the Third Komsomol Congress in 1920, the membership of the Komsomol stood at 400,000, or slightly over 1% of the youth in its membership category (14 to 23).<sup>24</sup> Worker and peasant youth were still accepted without recommendations, but all other youths were to be accepted only by recommendation of two Party or Komsomol members of not less than three months standing.<sup>25</sup> Members were to be

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<sup>24</sup>The age limit of 23 was set in 1918. Those over 23 could remain in the Komsomol, but could only vote if in a "guiding" body. The lower age limit of 14 was set in 1920, ibid., p. 31.

<sup>25</sup>This included students. The fact that this rule was handed down by the Party indicates its powers in Komsomol affairs. See "Polozheniia o rabote rossiiskogo kommunisticheskogo soiuzha molodezhi sredi uchashchikhsia (utverzhdenny







confirmed by the general meeting of the Komsomol organization concerned. The Komsomol governing bodies were now more susceptible to Party control. Nominations for its Central Committee were exclusively handled by the Party fraction. Voting was now by list rather than by individual nominee.<sup>26</sup>

The Third Congress marked another important shift of emphasis in the Party's approach to the role of the Komsomol. Now that the Civil War was drawing to a victorious end, the Party was faced with the demobilization of thousands of Komsomolites. It was also faced with the necessity of reconstructing the country after the devastation caused by the First World War and the Civil War. The task lay in persuading youth, and Komsomol youth in particular, that certain elements of the past were not to be rejected per se.

In his address to the Third Congress, Lenin asserted that the task of the younger generation was to build communism. No concrete measures of attaining this end were outlined, other than the insistence that a communist be educated (which was needed for re-construction). The attainment of communism was also seen in terms of building (which required education). "The task of youth in general",

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Orgbiuro Tsk RKP (b), 11 maia 1919 g.)", KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., op. cit., pp. 32-33.

<sup>26</sup>Fisher traces this development in detail, op. cit., pp. 33-34.



said Lenin, "and of the Komsomols and all other organizations in particular, might be summed up in a single word: learn." Communist society, argued Lenin, could only be created "on the basis of modern education" which should have the "purpose of training, educating, and teaching the youth of today" so as to imbue them "with communist ethics" -- which meant that everything was to be "subordinated to the interests of the proletariat's class struggle." In more concrete terms, the Komsomolite was to work in the suburban vegetable gardens and study.<sup>27</sup>

Many Komsomol members were taken aback by this mundane and prosaic stress: "Komsomol leaders present at the Congress did not understand Lenin's speech. . . . Just back from civil war glories and deficient in political knowledge. . . [they] were unprepared to comprehend the full significance of his address."<sup>28</sup> Besides noting that even Komsomol leaders were disillusioned, this passage is an important insight into the Soviet approach to socialization. The author assumes, first of all, that deficiency in political knowledge is the cause of deviant behaviour.

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<sup>27</sup>V.I. Lenin, Selected Works in Three Volumes (Moscow, 1967), III, pp. 461-475.

<sup>28</sup>A.P. Shakin, Kratkaia istoriia VLKSM (Moscow, 1928), pp. 87-88, as quoted in Ploss, op. cit., p. 11



The implication is that everything would be fine if people were educated in the right way. Preparation is seen as the cornerstone of acceptance. There is no allowance for a clash of motives.

Further disillusionment was caused by the introduction of NEP, which appeared to be a surrender of revolutionary goals. Youth began to ask, "What have we been fighting for?" When membership dropped by 40% in one year, the Party was forced to respond with a number of measures.<sup>29</sup> First, it sought to strengthen its control over the Komsomol: certain Komsomol positions could only be held by Party members of long service; continued stress was placed upon the regulation that Party members under 20 be active members;<sup>30</sup> and youth under 20 could now only join the Party through the Komsomol.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, it sought to instill pride in both the Party's relationship to the Komsomol and the latter's role in the building of a communist future. Special stress was placed upon the establishment of a "Komsomol-Party Togetherness Week" [nedelia sblizheniia

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<sup>29</sup>Membership fell from 400,000 in 1920 to 250,000 in 1921.

<sup>30</sup>Resolution of the 10th Party Congress, Section XI; KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., op. cit., pp. 42-43.

<sup>31</sup>"Polozhenie o prieme chlenov RKSM v chleny RKP (b)", KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., op. cit., pp. 54-55.



RKP i RKSM] in the fall of 1921.<sup>32</sup> In a letter sent to all Komsomol members, the Party outlined the activities which had to be undertaken during this week and stressed in direct, curt language that the Party was not only the commander [vozhd'] and instructor [rukovoditel'] of the working class but also the commander and instructor of the working youth. The polemical nature of the letter -- it did not recommend but demand -- insisted that only through discipline and unity would communism be attained: "you must consider yourselves to be members of one communist family"; "each of you must strive to be . . . a communist"; "only under the direction of the Party will you know how to be reared in the communist way."<sup>33</sup> Another attempt to instill enthusiasm by appealing to the loyalties and convictions of youth was the Party's insistence that only the Komsomol could "direct the petit-bourgeois element with benefit to the proletariat, but not be penetrated by this element."<sup>34</sup> By depicting the Komsomol as the glowing communist stronghold in the darkness

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<sup>32</sup>This was in conjunction with the Komsomol Central Committee. The members were informed through a joint postanovlenie, KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., pp. 47-48.

<sup>33</sup>For a copy of the letter, see ibid., pp. 48-51.

<sup>34</sup>This was stressed at Komsomol Congresses; Fisher, op. cit., p. 81.





of NEP society, the regime hoped to recreate enthusiasm for activism within the Komsomol and to recruit those youths disillusioned by what they felt was the bourgeois nature of NEP. A third measure for strengthening the role of the Komsomol was the establishment of factory schools. By giving the Komsomol direction over these, the Party made young workers dependent on the youth organization for promotion and even for the jobs themselves.<sup>35</sup>

These measures met with only partial success. Komsomol membership continued to fluctuate between 200,000 and 400,000 until 1923. One of the reasons for this fluctuation may have been the "worker" image which many organizations stressed to excess: "Even now a necktie, brooches and bows are regarded as signs of petty-bourgeois individualism. An orderly, hygienic way of life means banishment from the Komsomol."<sup>36</sup> Throughout this period, the qualities expected of a Komsomolite tended to stress asceticism rather than enthusiasm: the member had to be an example of self-sacrifice.<sup>37</sup> Revolutionary enthusiasm was to be directed

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<sup>35</sup>Instructions from the Party Central Committee in 1923 concerning political education in Factory-Plant Schools notes the major work to be performed by the Komsomol in this area. The Party was not only to provide support but also active help. "Ukazanie TsK RKP (b) ot 12 apreliia 1923", KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., op. cit., pp. 56-57.

<sup>36</sup>A. Slepov, ed., Byt i Molodezh' (Moscow, 1926), pp. 41-42, as quoted in Ploss, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>37</sup>One member of the Komsomol notes that these qualities



into production channels, but this did not mean that the Komsomol was to protect the interests of the young workers. Such protection would conflict with the regime's contention that there was no necessity under socialism to do this, since workers would automatically be protected by the very arrangement of society. The drive for these qualities was not overly successful in terms of the appeal generated by the Komsomol.

By the mid 1920's, then, the Komsomol-Party response to problems was beginning to take on the shape of a predictable pattern. Most notable in this pattern was Party control of Komsomol organizations. The Party would often issue directives or remove top members by merely reassigning them to other posts. It was evident, too, that the Komsomol was to be neither a mere Party appendage or an independent organization. Nor was it to be the directing agency for a number of smaller groups. It was, by the early 1920's no

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were considered to be a means to an end: "The spirit of the Komsomol of that time [1920s] must be mentioned. In public life and in their way of living the Komsomol members tried to realize the principles of Communism even then. If anyone had two suits or two pairs of shoes, he kept only what was most essential and gave the rest to his comrades. . . . Each of us . . . broke his neck trying to prove his faithfulness to the collective. . . . We sincerely believed that we had nothing to lose, . . . and that there was nothing but a fine future ahead of us. We. . . paid no attention to the difficulties of the time and. . . devoted all our efforts to restoring the shattered economy of the country. . . ."

Nikolai Lunev, "Blind Faith in a Bright Future", Soviet Youth: Twelve Komsomol Histories (Munich: Institute for the Study of the USSR, 1959), Series I, No. 51, p. 31 [my italics].



longer an organization for youth, but an organization of youth, for the Party. Although its membership was numerically, weak, it had great potential as a future mass organization, as it was the only youth group permitted.

The Komsomol's close relationship to the Party during the late 1920s was reflected in the participation of various "factions" in Party politics. During Stalin's rise to power, the coalitions and power constellations within the Party found their counterparts within the Komsomol. The Leningrad Komsomol organization, for instance, backed Zinov'ev in 1925 and refused to bind itself to the decisions of the Party.<sup>38</sup> It was consequently purged, along with 15 members of the Komsomol Central Committee.

The late 1920s were times of stress within the organization. University youths pressed for information from and about foreign countries;<sup>39</sup> many illegal societies, such as the "Young Marxists" in Georgia and a "Trotskyist Union of Youth" in Armenia, were discovered;<sup>40</sup> the Ukrainian

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<sup>38</sup>Ploss, op. cit., p. 12; Avtorkhanov, op. cit., pp. 12-13; Daniels, op. cit., pp. 227-228, 255; see also Leonard Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (London: Methuen, 1960), pp. 291-292.

<sup>39</sup>In 1927, students of Moscow higher educational establishments sent a note to the Party Presidium stating that they should be allowed to read foreign newspapers if youth in other countries were worse off than they were. A. Lebed, "Youth as the Mainstay of the Soviet Regime", Bulletin, X: I (January, 1963), p. 21.

<sup>40</sup>Bukharin reported the existence of these groups in





Komsomol again tried to secede. Various religious organizations were also a problem, but they were not to survive very long in the face of Party repression, even though their membership rivaled that of the Komsomol.<sup>41</sup>

The production-oriented qualities first nurtured in the Komsomol during the early 1920s were given increased emphasis at the VIII Komsomol Congress in 1928. Komsomol members were called upon to form "shock groups" and "light cavalry detachments" to set the pace in labour productivity and to cut bureaucratic inefficiency, respectively. They were also called upon to go into the countryside and set up collectives and educate the peasants to join them. These were not new tasks, but they now received more emphasis.<sup>42</sup>

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his report to the Komsomol's Eighth Congress in 1928. For a description of more illegal group activity, see ibid., pp. 21-23.

<sup>41</sup>These were: The Baptist Youth [Baptomol]; The Christian Youth [Khristomol]; and The League of Young Believers. Their combined membership was as high as the Komsomol's (circa 3 million). Fisher, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>42</sup>"Light Cavalry" detachments had apparently been in existence for some time but only gained notoriety in 1928. BSE (2nd ed.; 1953) XXIV: 411. No date is given for their establishment. The Party circular on this group stated that "The basic task of the. . . 'light cavalry' is the decisive struggle against bureaucratism, against the sluggishness of the apparatus, and its scornful attitude toward the worker's needs." KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., op. cit., p. 198.





The Komsomol responded very well to this call. The advent of the Five Year Plans evoked tremendous zeal and fervor among the youth. Komsomol members were given important tasks in the building of industrial units in the Ukraine, the Urals, and Siberia. The liquidation of the kulaks and the collectivization drives afforded Komsomolites ample opportunity to display their initiative and enthusiasm. It seemed, after all, that some of the promises of a bright future were at last being put into practice.

Stress was now placed on "heroism in labor". The Stakhanovite movement, in fact, was born in honour of International Youth Day in a Donbass mine.<sup>43</sup> Komsomol youth, too, were responding well to the call for specialists.<sup>44</sup>

With time, however, this period proved disillusioning to some, as their initial enthusiasm and energy were dissipated and alienated by continued hardships in working and living conditions. The promise of a bright future did not seem to be materializing. A great promise, after all, to be effective, must at least provide some reassuring indication that it is being fulfilled. This did not seem forthcoming.

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<sup>43</sup>"Stakhanov, A.G.", BSE (2nd ed.; 1957), XL: 555.

<sup>44</sup>During the First and Second Five Year Plans, 118,000 engineers and technicians, 69,000 agricultural experts, 800 doctors, and 91,000 teachers were taken from the ranks of the Komsomol; Avtorkhanov, op. cit., p. 14.



The great purges and the terror of the 1930s also indicated that the regime was no longer seeking legitimacy and support through persuasion and promises. The Stalinist method of socialization was anything but subtle. The purges, nevertheless, did provide an opportunity for surviving activists to fill important positions left vacant in the Komsomol hierarchy.

During the mid-1930s, the social composition of the Komsomol was fundamentally altered. A new class of specialists and technicians had emerged as a result of industrialization, but gained no easy access to the Komsomol because of the admission requirements. The 10th Komsomol Congress in 1936 called for fundamental policy changes in these requirements. The new membership policy that was adopted transformed the Komsomol from an organization of peasants and workers into a broad-based, mass organization in which social origin was no longer a factor. The loosening of membership qualifications would pave the way for the penetration of the offspring of the Stalinist administrative bureaucracy and of the technical intelligentsia. The Congress also emphasized Komsomol work in political indoctrination, which had been neglected during the emphasis on construction.

The new admission policy proved very successful in recruiting youth from the new professions and from educational establishments. Komsomol membership tripled to eleven million



by 1941. Although part of this increase was attributable to the raising of the age limit to 26, the Komsomol's recruitment drive succeeded in bringing in vast numbers of youth having other than peasant or worker background.

The Party, however, no longer made any effort to conceal or rationalize its control over the organization. The top position in the organization was given, in 1938, to the editor of Komsomol'skaia pravda (the organ of the Central Committee), Mikhailov, who had only been a Komsomol member for one year.<sup>45</sup> The Party, too, now began to draw heavily upon Komsomol members. The XVIII Party Congress in 1939 declared that Komsomol members who became Party members must leave the former organization unless they held leading posts.<sup>46</sup> The new Party regulations were completely frank about Party-Komsomol relations:

The [Komsomol] is the active helper of the Party in all state and economic construction. Komsomol organizations must in fact be active conveyors of Party directives in all fields of socialist construction, especially where there are no primary Party organizations.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, on the eve of the Second World War, the Komsomol was expanding into a mass organization which was

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<sup>45</sup>Fisher, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>46</sup>"Postanovlenie TsK RKP (b) ot 17 iiunia 1939", KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., op. cit., pp. 284-285. See also Article 64 of the Party Rules, 1939, ibid., p. 284.

<sup>47</sup>Loc. cit.



clearly subordinate to the Party. The rank-and-file had been socialized into uncritical acceptance of Party directives through purges and promises of a better future. Any political action resulting from shifting alliances within the Party had been wiped out by Stalin's rise to power and the purely economic tasks it had been assigned during the "building of socialism". The Komsomol hero was no longer a fervent revolutionary hero, but a "hero of socialist labor". In the process of building socialism, a new class of young technicians and bureaucrats arose and were given easier access to the Komsomol through the easing of admission requirements. With the admission of these new elements, the Komsomol consequently grew into a more broadly-based organization. But students, technicians, and bureaucrats were not joining the Komsomol because it was an organization comprising the most advanced youth: it was a necessary stepping-stone in their career.

With the advent of the war, the Komsomol was enlisted to serve in various capacities, from participation in underground activities to the mobilization of youth in support of war production and agriculture. Three and a half million Komsomolites were decorated with orders and medals for their bravery in the war. At least 60% of partisan detachments were youth, of whom 50,000 were awarded orders and 99 were Heroes of the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup> Ad-

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<sup>48</sup>A. Lebed, "Youth As the Mainstay of the Soviet







mission policy during the war was further relaxed to permit millions of servicemen and civilians into the ranks, which numbered 15 million by October of 1945.

The campaign to mobilize youth had, at the beginning of the war, stressed patriotic duty to the homeland. But when the tide of the war was turning to victory, the Komsomol was given an important role in a massive indoctrination and education program.<sup>49</sup> It was probably rightly felt that mass membership was diluting the "political mindedness" of the membership. Herein lies the corollary to the mass membership policy: it would only prove useful for purposes of mass indoctrination if a successful campaign of political education were maintained.

Perhaps this was the reason why Komsomol and Party officials did not seem unduly disturbed when Komsomol membership fell by 6 million in four years. This drop resulted mainly from the failure of former servicemen to register with their local organizations and the infraction of rules or failure to pay membership dues. Although the Komsomol

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Regime", Bulletin, X: 1 (January, 1963), p. 24.

<sup>49</sup>Fisher, op. cit., p. 220. See also a postanovlenie of the Party Central Committee in September of 1944 "Ob organizatsii nauchno-prosvetitel'noi propagandy", KPSS o Komsomole. . . ., op. cit., pp. 291-292. A detailed analysis of the political education activity within the Komsomol in the postwar years is given in S.I. Ploss, "Political Education in the Postwar Komsomol", The American Slavic and East European Review, XV: 4 (December, 1956), pp. 489-505.



was still attempting to expand its membership, it apparently had no room for passive and indifferent elements.

The XI Congress in 1949 reiterated many of the demands made during the early 1930s. The need to rebuild after the devastation of the war demanded the same qualities of self-denial and discipline as the construction period of the 1930s. The cycle seems to have begun anew. No doubt the Komsomolites wondered what they had been fighting for. But this time, they were asked to endure hardship for the task of building communism, not socialism. The terminology had changed, yet conditions were much the same.

The Congress was enthusiastically named "The Congress of the Young Builders of Communism". Mikhailov, Komsomol First Secretary, claimed that "our generation" would live under communism. This, apparently, was going to be achieved by the old stress on utilitarian tasks and indoctrination.

The ensuing campaign to expand Komsomol membership met with some positive results. By the XII Congress in 1954, membership had doubled to 18,000,000. This figure, however, remained fairly constant throughout the 1950s.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Although membership had climbed to 24 million by 1969, Komsomol officials admit that there is a very high rate of turnover. Pavlov, for instance, claimed that 15 million had joined the Komsomol between 1962 and 1966, yet membership only increased by three million; Pavlov's report to the XV Komsomol Congress, Current Digest of the Soviet Press [Hereafter cited as CDSP], XVIII: 21 (June 15, 1966), p. 3.



The death of Stalin, however, marked a new stage in the history of the Komsomol.<sup>51</sup> The unmasking and denunciation of the cult of personality made the young reflect upon the past era. If Stalin had been wrong, they began to ask, then perhaps much of his system had been wrong. The liberalization of the arts, exemplified by the works of Yevtushenko, Dudintsev, Solzhenitsyn, and Ehrenburg, seemed to indicate that the new regime was willing to allow a certain amount of indirect criticism of the past.

The educational level of youth had also risen. No longer were they to be satisfied with hackneyed phrases and cliché-ridden justifications. The regime, by discrediting Stalin, would be forced to devise more sophisticated methods of control.

In the meantime, the Komsomol rank and file was beginning to regain its voice. Members, especially students, called for organizational changes. They wanted Komsomol meetings to be less dull and even wanted to elect their own candidates. Others began to drop out of the organization because it failed to provide them with anything new or enthusiastic. It seemed a relic of the past. Still others looked upon Komsomol membership as just one more organizational necessity. In many ways, the situation in the post-Stalin period strongly resembled that of the 1920s.

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<sup>51</sup>This subject will be treated with more detail in the next chapter. It is included here to provide an overall perspective.





In conclusion, the function and standing which the Komsomol assumed in relation to the Communist Party and Soviet society was not the result of a carefully-reasoned evolutionary process based on a master plan. The pattern of Party control which grew out of the early Party-Komsomol relationships was not the consequence of the deliberate implementation of a totalitarian scheme, but rather the result of a number of responses to a variety of problems.

The Bolsheviks' early "patronage" of youth movements was based on the desire to mobilize youth for political and economic tasks and thus involve it in the values they professed. Youth organizations were seen as a valuable instrument whereby values could be injected into the younger generation, many of which were felt to be already present in proletarian youth. By restricting membership in the Komsomol to those youth who would serve as the prototype of the future communist or socialist man, the Party was acting on the assumption that youth could be socialized into the system through force of example and external pressure. This approach, however, required that there be only one example which to emulate. In order to guarantee that an organization of youthful "example-setters" would be socialist in character -- and remain that way -- it had to be controlled. Thus, the initial Soviet approach to political socialization was both positive and negative: on the one hand, all other spontaneous organizations, even if they promoted the official qualities, were





to be repressed.

The Komsomol organization developed parallel to that of the Party. As with the Party, its early growth was marked by the enthusiasm, revolutionary spirit, and lively debate of its members. As the Party grew stronger, however, the Komsomol grew weaker as an independent organization. Party "guidance" soon became Party control: local party organizations watched corresponding Komsomol organizations closely; top Komsomol officials, who also had to be Party members, could be removed at will by Party reassignment to other posts; Party directives became Komsomol directives; the Party faction always named the top Komsomol officers.

The Komsomol was also treated as an appendage to the Party. When, as in the Leningrad case of 1925, Komsomol organizations aligned themselves to splinter groups within the Party, they were treated with the same degree of severity as the "deviant" party groups. It was evident by the late 1920s that the Komsomol was an organization of youth, but not for youth: it existed as an adjunct of the Party for socialization and recruitment purposes.

The Komsomol early became an agency for socialization and recruitment. Its members were constantly required to conduct their lives according to officially-desired qualities. The Komsomolite was above all to be an example-setter, an organizer, an agitator, a "conscious fighter"



for the Party and for the country.

The pattern that developed out of the institutionalization of the socializing process was initially a response to the practical tasks of construction and education. The most notable element of this pattern was the alternating stress on practical tasks and political education, although both were present at all times. These shifts were of course also the result of shifts in priorities. The stress on political involvement during and after the revolution, for example, was followed by the practical tasks of reconstruction and NEP. Similarly, the period of industrialization was followed by a vigorous campaign of political indoctrination. The same process can be detected during the Second World War. This was in part a function of the regime's failure to provide some measure of fulfillment for its promises. Disillusionment was to be met with propaganda. The underlying assumption is an important one: disillusionment is caused by the lack of political knowledge (or, its converse: the right amount of political indoctrination will prevent disillusionment).

The organization's most important contribution, however, lay in recruitment: not only did it screen and train youth for Party membership, but it also mobilized vast numbers for agricultural and construction tasks. The Party especially drew from the Komsomol ranks during the period



of rapid industrialization. But this same period required increasing numbers of specialists and technicians, who could not easily enter the Komsomol, for its membership was largely restricted to workers and peasants. When, after 1936, the "new class" was admitted, the Komsomol grew into a mass organization overnight. In the process, membership in the Komsomol became a necessity for personal advancement.

The Party's shifting responses to the priorities dictated by NEP, collectivization, and industrialization had occasioned corresponding shifts in the qualities which the Komsomol had to show. But in the process, political indoctrination itself became institutionalized and stultifying. Youth was asked to subordinate their interests -- both emotional and intellectual -- for the sake of the common cause. Officially-desired qualities and characteristics were now pounded into simple formulas for the purpose of mass agitation (this, too, was a function of the expanding membership of the Komsomol). No longer concerned with lengthy and complicated explanations for its shifts in policy, the Party repeatedly relied upon slogans and oversimplifications. As a result, education, propaganda, agitation -- the tools of socialization -- became didactic.

In short, the Soviet approach to socialization was based upon absolute distrust of spontaneously-organized social groups, the desire to transmit social values only



TABLE I

KOMSOMOL MEMBERSHIPAND ITS PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WITHIN ITSAGE RANGE: 1918-1970

YEAR	MEMBERSHIP	PERCENTAGE OF ALL YOUTH IN AGE RANGE
1918	22,100	
1919	96,000	
1920	319,000	1
1921	250,000	
1922	200,000	
1923	400,000	
1924	840,000	
1925	1,500,000	
1926	1,750,000	
1927	2,000,000	
1930	2,900,000	6
1931	3,000,000	
1934	4,500,000	
1936	3,600,000	
1938	4,900,000	
1939	8,000,000	
1940	10,000,000	20.4
1945	15,000,000	
1949	9,300,000	
1950	11,000,000	22
1951	12,000,000	
1952	14,000,000	
1954	18,500,000	
1960	19,000,000	36.5
1962	20,000,000	
1963	21,000,000	
1966	23,000,000	
1969	24,000,000	
1970	25,000,000	--

Sources: R.T. Fisher, Jr., op. cit., Appendix A, p. 409 (for membership figures up to 1952); figures from 1954 to 1969 are taken from Congress reports and newspaper articles; 1970 figure is taken from an article by E. Tiazhel'nikov, "Iunost' uchit'sia kommunizmu", Pravda, March 10, 1970, p. 2; percentage figures are taken from A. Lebed, "Youth As the Mainstay of the Soviet Regime", Bulletin, X: 1 (January, 1963), p. 25.





within official institutional channels, and reliance upon a didactic method of teaching.



### CHAPTER III

#### SOVIET YOUTH AND THE KOMSOMOL IN THE POST-STALIN PERIOD

The death of Stalin in March of 1953 marked the beginning of a new era in the development of Soviet society. This new era found its most significant expression in the reluctance of the Party "collective leadership" to employ terroristic methods in achieving conformity. The relaxation of terror, however, by removing much of the deterrent against freedom of expression, not only aroused the expectation of change, but also encouraged the previously-passive elements of Soviet society to voice their long-repressed opinions on the form this change should take.

Once the repression, fear, and coercion of the past were relaxed, it remained to be seen how the population would react to their new-found freedom and how the regime would handle rebelliousness, should it threaten the leadership's control over society. The ensuing outbreak of debate and discussion seemed to indicate that some new measures would have to be developed in order to achieve outward conformity. But would the leadership approach the problem in a new way, or would it merely reemphasize traditional methods? In other words, would the future approach be the past approach minus terror?



The Soviet collective leadership, anxious to gain legitimacy, was at first reluctant to clamp down on youth ferment, for criticism of the past was politically desirable at this time, so long as it did not threaten the basic principles of Communism or the leadership of the Communist Party. But when this restlessness increased, both in scope and intensity, the Party was forced to act without having any clearly-defined alternative to past methods of gaining conformity. It was only realized that more sophisticated methods of socialization would have to be developed.

#### Soviet Youth Speaks Its Mind

With the new-found freedom after the death of Stalin, Soviet youth seemed to regain its voice. Much to the dislike of Party and Komsomol officials, youth, and especially Komsomol members, not only discussed and debated political issues, but did so largely outside the confines of the Komsomol, where they could not be watched and where the conversation could not be directed into "useful" and "safe" channels.<sup>1</sup> This development was especially evident in the universities, in which absenteeism, discussion

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<sup>1</sup>This was a complaint of V. Semichastny, First Secretary of the Komsomol at the time. KP, February 26, 1959; quoted in Anatoly Balashov, "Youth Speaks Its Mind", Youth in Ferment (Munich: Institute for the Study of the USSR, 1962), Series I, No. 66, p. 3.



meetings, the "awkward" questioning of teachers, underground pamphlets, and even demonstrations were of frequent occurrence.<sup>2</sup> Rebelliousness of this nature, however, at least indicated that some segments of Soviet youth were not indifferent to political and organizational questions, and were sufficiently concerned to take active steps. With minor exceptions, this form of criticism was neither dangerous to the regime nor considered as such.<sup>3</sup>

Of more immediate importance to the regime was youth's "consumer attitude toward socialism". The most explicit manifestations of this attitude were the desire for material goods and the reluctance to work at hard labor in some remote area of the country (or anywhere, for that matter). Youth wanted to stay in the cities, so much so that they would rather become short-order cooks (while

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<sup>2</sup>S.V. and P. Utechin, "Patterns of Nonconformity", PoC, VI: 3 (May-June, 1957), pp. 23-24.

Moscow University was forced to cancel further classes on Marxism-Leninism in December of 1957 due to the awkward questioning of teachers. See a letter from an anonymous Soviet student, published in Alex Inkeles, Kent Geiger, eds., Soviet Society: A Book of Readings (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), pp. 238-239.

<sup>3</sup>Some students in Moscow who had distributed anti-Stalinist and also "seditious" leaflets received sentences up to 25 years in prison. They were subsequently released in 1956. David Burg, "Soviet Youth's Opposition to the Communist Regime", Bulletin, IV: 5 (May, 1957), p. 47.





waiting for an "opening" in University or a better job) than work in their assigned positions.<sup>4</sup> The desire to remain in Moscow was especially strong:

This year Moscow University supplied the ministries and departments with 378 fewer specialists than promised; the latter remained in Moscow. The University still does not know the whereabouts of around 300 specialists who graduated in 1953.<sup>5</sup>

Reports from other cities were similar.<sup>6</sup>

These attitudes were particularly prevalent in the sons and daughters of the "new class" of specialists and technicians. To them, a university education should assure a comfortable, leisurely life. They resented being placed in remote areas of the country, building blast furnaces or sowing wheat. In addition, they were ill-equipped and

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<sup>4</sup>Allen Kassof, "Youth vs. the Regime: Conflict in Values", PoC, VI: 3 (May-June, 1957), p. 16, footnote 4, reports that he met students in 1956 who took jobs as store clerks to avoid working out of the city. The desire to remain or move to the big cities was still very strong in the late 1960s. See [anonymous] Message From Moscow (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), pp. 124-125.

<sup>5</sup>N. Afonin, "Ulushchit' podgotovku, raspredelenie i ispol'zovanie molodykh spetsialistov", Partiinaia zhizn', No. 13 (October, 1954), p. 24. See also Yuri Marin, "The Komsomol and Soviet Youth", Bulletin, II: 7 (July, 1955), pp. 45-50.

<sup>6</sup>A report from Yaroslavl, for instance, stated that 2140 of the 6500 graduates of secondary schools within the city were probably "hanging around doing nothing." Izvestiia, July 1, 1956, p. 1; trans. as "The Road to Life", CDSP, VIII: 26 (August 8, 1956), p. 25.



inexperienced for anything but a white-collar job:

How terrible! What will be the outcome? I found myself somewhere in the fields, in the dark, in the rain, with no light, but with my graduation diploma in my pocket!<sup>7</sup>

Pampered and protected by rich and influential parents who were equally unwilling to see them work in the Far East, the young "comfort-seekers" were not forced into channels of occupational achievement to earn a living, but could in fact do "nothing at all".

This worship of the "leisure ethic" was probably a significant factor in the increased incidents of "idleness" [bezdel'nichestvo]. Broadly defined in the Soviet press as "slackness on the job", "hanging around doing nothing", or simple "laziness", this term referred to leisure time as well as work. Idleness in one's free time, for instance, was considered to be a contributing factor in drunkenness and hooliganism. Shelepin, the First Secretary of the Komsomol, admitted to the 20th Party Congress in 1956 that many young people were ". . . leading an idle life, declining socially useful labor and tolerating immoral acts. . . [such as] drunkenness and hooliganism."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>From a story by A. Kuznetsov, "The Continuation of a Legend", Iunost, No. 7 (1957); quoted in Yuri Marin, "Current Komsomol Problems", Bulletin, IV: 12 (December, 1957), p. 40.

<sup>8</sup>Shelepin's speech to 20th Party Congress, as trans.



For the regime, the most serious lesson taught by idleness and the "consumer's attitude toward socialism" lay in what appeared to be youth's indifference to both political and economic questions. Not only was it apparent that Soviet youth wanted to cash in on some of the past promises but it was also obvious that the past stress on "class consciousness" and the promotion of a "communist attitude toward labor" provided neither the incentive nor the desire to accept new promises. Herein lay the real danger of youth's restlessness and the real task of socialization.

Rebellion and ferment were also reflected in the Komsomol, whose organizational inflexibility and platitudinous approach were especially susceptible to criticism. Disenchantment was expressed in a variety of ways, the most explicit of which were: criticism of Komsomol meetings; opposition to "senior, experienced cadres"; defiance of authority; apathy and indifference; refusal to accept Komsomol responsibility; and the establishment of separate youth groups.

Criticism of Komsomol meetings was by far the most vociferous.

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in Current Soviet Policies: The Documentary Record of the 20th Party Congress and Its Aftermath (New York: Praeger, 1957), p. 145. For a general treatment of relations between the Communist Party and Soviet youth in this period, see Yuri Marin, "The Soviet Communist Party's Policy Toward Soviet Youth", Bulletin, III: 4 (April, 1956), pp. 35-40.





Everyone knew in advance that they would have to be bored at the opening of the meeting; nothing to be done about it -- it's the custom.<sup>9</sup>

Attending a meeting of the Komsomol was like sitting in a room in which a fly was constantly buzzing on the wall for two hours.<sup>10</sup>

Some officials suggested that the boredom and cliches were a significant factor in deadening the "natural interest" of youth in politics.<sup>11</sup> The Komsomol meeting, it was felt, was divorced from life: it was too structured; reports were stereotyped and too often drawn from the slogans of the central press; there was too much stress on the revolutionary period; members wanted to "do something" significant.<sup>12</sup> Komsomol members resented the sham "elections" of their superiors, which often caused the formation of considerable opposing forces within a meeting.

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<sup>9</sup>Literaturnaia gazeta, May 25, 1957; as quoted in Radio Free Europe Research, Communist Areas, USSR (May 21, 1960), p. 3.

<sup>10</sup>From the files of the Project on the Soviet Social System, Russian Research Center, Harvard University. Quoted in Allen Kassof, "Afflictions of the Youth League", PoC, VII: 5 (September-October, 1958), p. 19.

<sup>11</sup>"... The natural and serious interest of youth in political life has been knocked out of them by formal rhetoric and boredom." Literaturnaia gazeta, May 25, 1957, p. 2; trans. in CDSP, IX: 7 (March 27, 1957), pp. 12-14.

<sup>12</sup>Allen Kassof, "Afflictions of the Youth League", op. cit., p. 20.





Top Komsomol officials recognized these problems but suggested that the secretary of the primary organization was at fault because he did everything himself instead of delegating his authority. They also argued that the average Komsomol member was deflated in the presence of apparatchik professionals who knew "suitable" quotations and the "ins" and "outs" of organizational procedure. Yet they offered no concrete solutions to this problem nor did they even mention the organizational restrictions placed upon the range of freedom in discussing certain issues (such as rank-and-file participation in drawing up resolutions or the democratic election of officers).<sup>13</sup> The primary Komsomol organization secretary was unlikely to delegate any important authority, for this would lessen his control, and consequently, that of the Party. This was the very crux of the dilemma between the desire for participation on the one hand, and the need for strict control from above on the other.

The de-Stalinization campaign was in part responsible for intensifying this dilemma. Young people seemed to argue that, if Stalin had been wrong, then perhaps much of his system had been wrong also. This condemnation of past authority led to the suspicion of present authority.

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<sup>13</sup>V. Zaichikov and N. Mesiatsev, "O samodeiatel'nosti i initsiative komsomol'skikh organizatsii", Molodoi kommunist, No. 6 (June, 1956), pp. 18-28.



Opposition to "senior, experienced cadres" was now openly expressed at Komsomol meetings. Youth questioned the legitimacy of their superiors, whom, they felt, had been "infected by the cult". The Party youth journal, Molodoi kommunist, hinted that opposition was even expressed against the Party leadership and against Party supervision of the Komsomol.

For the Komsomol of our country, questions pertaining to Party leadership are not open to discussion. . . . Yet there are now demagogues who are expiating. . . on the superfluosness of supervision of the Komsomol by local Party organizations.<sup>14</sup>

When youth discovered that they could not discuss the really important questions of their society, many resorted to ridicule or simply remained quiet, totally frustrated, disillusioned, and apathetic. Idleness, "nihilism", hooliganism, stilyagism and other manifestations of "deviant" behaviour were not infrequent. Ridicule was a favourite method of rebellion for the "nibonicho" (a contraction of the Russian words for "neither God nor the devil") who were severely criticized in the press.

Imagine yourself at a school debate, let us say, where the Komsomol members are discussing the meaning of happiness. . . . From a far, dim corner of the room a remark is thrown out and then as a comment on the excited and sincere words of the debater: 'Did you get that? Patriotis-sm!' It is pronounced this way on purpose -- Patriotis-sm! Suddenly someone concealed behind the others' backs utters: 'Stormy

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<sup>14</sup>A. Butenko, "Edinstvo i obshchnost' tselei dvizheniia k sotsializmu", Molodoi kommunist, No. 1 (January, 1957), p. 15.



ovation, all rise!',<sup>15</sup>

This was the local nibonicho at work.

Indifference and apathy were also evident in the universities. Students resented the organized indoctrination of the Komsomol and considered its activists to be fools, -- "conscious idiots" as they were called -- opportunists, or busy-bodies.<sup>16</sup> Komsomol'skaia pravda lamented conditions in Kazan University, for instance, where ". . . the student [members] of the [Komsomol] bureau of the University's chemical faculty, having decided that Komsomol work hampers their studies, demanded that they be replaced before the expiration of their term."<sup>17</sup> There were many other incidents of Komsomol members refusing to accept responsibility. It seemed that at least some young people did not consider that the Komsomol had anything to offer them.

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<sup>15</sup>Literaturnaia gazeta, May 25, 1957, p. 2; quoted in Allen Kassof, "Afflictions of the Youth League", op. cit., p. 22. The reference to the "Stormy ovation, all rise", was meant as a satirical reference to the stenographic method of describing different levels of ovation at Party Congresses.

<sup>16</sup>For a general treatment of students' attitudes to university Komsomol activists, see Peter H. Juviler, "Communist Morality and Soviet Youth", PoC, X: 3 (May-June, 1961), pp. 16-24.

<sup>17</sup>A. Tarasov, Head of the Students' Department of the Komsomol Central Committee, "Kazan' -- A Students' City", KP, April 13, 1958; as translated in A. Gaev, "The Young Generation of Soviet Writers", Bulletin, V: 9 (September, 1958), p. 39.





The literature of the period reflected the growing disillusionment with the Komsomol. Literary works, given more freedom of expression during the "thaw" period, were criticized for depicting the Komsomol negatively or neglecting to portray its supposed influence on youth. There was rather a shift of emphasis from revolutionary romanticism and Komsomol heroism to eternal human problems. "You are living in the past", says one of the characters in A. Korneichuk's play "Why the Stars Were Smiling", "I in the future. The Komsomol was probably once a gay interesting organization, but now it is such a bore. It only hampers us poets with its truisms. . . ." <sup>18</sup>

By the mid-1950s, it was clear that the Komsomol was facing a crisis. Its rank-and-file were rebellious, or apathetic, or unwilling to take the organization seriously. Unable to generate any enthusiasm or esprit de corps, the organization was little more than a collection of "meager robots" -- to paraphrase Fisher's term <sup>19</sup> -- who faithfully and unceremoniously went through the motions.

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<sup>18</sup> Znamia, No. 1 (1958); as quoted in A. Gaev, "Soviet Youth and Literature", Bulletin, VI: 7 (July, 1959), p. 52 [my italics]. This article provides a good general treatment of literature on the Komsomol in this period.

<sup>19</sup> Fisher maintains that the "eager robot" ideal has been fairly constant in the Komsomol. See his Pattern for Soviet Youth, op. cit., passim, and his "The Soviet Model of the Ideal Youth", in Cyril E. Black, ed., The Transformation of Russian Society (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 625-635.





. . . There are in our ranks Komsomol members who are not hooligans and who are not debauched, but who cannot be called active. These are, as it were, 'middle-of-the roaders.' They pay their membership dues punctually and attend meetings, but that is all.<sup>20</sup>

Komsomol membership failed to grow despite a very strong recruitment drive in which entire groups were enrolled at one time.

. . . Does youth willingly join all Komsomol organizations? Unfortunately not. Over many months and sometimes even for years, . . . many Komsomol organizations fail to grow.<sup>21</sup>

Independent clubs and societies having personal goals, however, began to appear in increasing numbers. Some were harmless in character, being organized for community help or personal improvement, but they were nevertheless denounced. Others existed for more mundane purposes:

A group of young idlers formed a club called 'Tedrall' and recently compiled an anonymous letter about themselves: 'Recently in our club it has been said more and more often that life is short. Everything alive on earth must die. Therefore we will not be fools but, before it is too late, take from life all its sweetness and pleasure. Now we are arranging real orgies which are impossible to describe!'<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>KP, March 22, 1957; quoted in Yuri Marin, "Current Komsomol Problems", Bulletin, IV: 12 (December, 1957), p. 41.

<sup>21</sup>"O chem govoriat tsifry rosta VLKSM", Molodoi kommunist, No. 6 (June, 1956), p. 53.

<sup>22</sup>Reported in Martin Stieger, "The Problem of Youth", Problems of Soviet Internal Policy: A Symposium of the Institute for the Study of the USSR [Proceedings of the Twelfth Institute Conference] (Munich: Institute for the Study of the USSR, 1960), p. 92.



It seems, then, that youth was growing increasingly estranged from the ideals of the past and from the Komsomol, which represented them. With Stalin dead, everything had again resumed human proportions.<sup>23</sup> It was only natural that the relaxation of terror would make human, personal problems loom larger. In the process, the conflicts between the goals and desires of the regime and of the individual were bound to become sharper. The fact that there was no open revolt or widespread disaffection with the regime itself did not decrease the importance of youth's restlessness. It should be noted here, however, that the outward expressions of youth's rebelliousness or apathy did not develop in an incremental manner. All of the aforementioned problems were present in varying degrees at any one time.

The significant developments within the 1950s lay not in youth's restlessness, but in their indifference to both political and economic matters. In general terms, youth was at first enthusiastic about the prospect of participating in a changing society. Much to the dislike of the Soviet leadership, this participation found its most fervent expression in political and social problems.

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<sup>23</sup>Juviler reports this conversation with one Soviet graduate student: "Under Stalin everything was larger than human scale -- the leader, the buildings, the terror. Things have resumed human proportions." "Communist Morality and Soviet Youth", op. cit., p. 18.



The real problem, however, was mobilization for economic efficiency. While it was realized that the Stalin system of terror did not allow for the level of initiative necessary in a complex economic society such as the one emerging in the Soviet Union, the problem of instilling the new qualities in the absence of coercive incentives required a certain level of tolerance in the transformation period between the old and the new. But youth saw the immediate post-Stalin period not as one of transformation, but one of renewal. They felt no compulsion or desire to subscribe only to the production ethic. With the economy lagging, the Soviet regime would be forced to mobilize youth not only for active acceptance of the economic principle, "he who does not work, neither shall he eat", but also for the pursuit of efficiency.

Perhaps the most salient comment on this period (1953 to 1958) would point to the lack of regime response to the problem of youth. The leadership seemed to merely plod along, using stop-gap measures and meeting criticism with criticism. There were no clearly defined or general formulas upon which the leadership could rely. They were only reluctant to use force. By the end of the 1950s, however, it became apparent that new methods had to be found to put an end to the estrangement of youth. The regime and the Komsomol began promoting a series of campaigns designed to achieve this. Campaigns, of course, were nothing





new. But would the tactics by which they were conducted demonstrate a change of approach?

### The Revival of an Old Model: The New Soviet Man

The concept of the "new Soviet man" was not a new theme for the Soviet citizen in the 1950s and 1960s. It had been a goal of Soviet propaganda since the founding of the Soviet state. The methods used to form the new man and the qualities the latter was to show, however, have differed from period to period, and have been largely subordinated to the necessities of the moment. The campaigns initiated in the late 1950s differed little from past traditions: the propaganda and political education emanating from the state-controlled communication networks and social organizations constantly stressed the attitudinal qualities of the new man, but the practical measures employed were more a response to solving current problems, especially economic ones, than an attempt to fashion a particular type of individual. It was probably hoped that some of the campaign enthusiasm would be internalized by youth through their involvement.

The belief that man is malleable, and that his character and behavior patterns can be shaped by the force of his own will as well as by his environment, has long been a basic tenet in the Soviet approach to socialization.





Seen from this perspective, mobilization supplies the situational stimuli and part of the education through experience, which, when supplemented by propaganda, didactic lecturing, and peer-group pressure, constitutes an important method of forming a new man.

When Marx had spoken, in his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, of the new man under communism, he had referred to future man's freedom to do as he wished: he could be both fisherman and philosopher in the same day. But the new man envisioned by the Soviet Union during the 1920s was in essence an industrial man. More importantly, the qualities of this industrial man were to be imposed from above, that is, organizationally, and internalized through man's self-will, the qualities and methods of which were carefully outlined by official pedagogues.<sup>24</sup> Herein lay the inherent dilemma which still plagues Soviet socialization efforts to the present day: rigid control from above is difficult to combine with self-activity from below.

The qualities expected of the new man during the late 1920s and the 1930s were those corresponding to the needs of a society industrializing within a strictly-controlled, organizationally-centralized governing framework.

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<sup>24</sup>For a detailed analysis of the development of the model of the "new Soviet man" during the 1920s and 1930s, see Ina Schlesinger, The Pioneer Organization: The Evolution of Citizenship Education in the Soviet Union (Unpublished PhD. dissertation, Columbia University, 1967), chapters V and VI.



Organizational discipline, that is, subordination to organizational directives, was to be combined with self-discipline and self-will. The virtues demanded were those of a modernizing society: strength, endurance, toughness, dexterity, precision, accuracy, and industriousness. The effective linking of organizational and self-discipline was to be achieved through the "collective", a concept devised by A.S. Makarenko, the famous Soviet pedagogue. A "collective" consisted of a group of people having a common purpose and a common will to achieve it. The individual within the collective was not only to subordinate his own personal will to that of the collective, but he was also to internalize the collective's aims.

The basic traits of the new man during the Stalin era were will-power, Soviet patriotism, discipline, and a sense of duty and responsibility. Discipline, however, was defined as subordination to the leader, not the organization. This was replaced after Stalin's death by subordination to rules.

When, by the mid-1950s, youth ferment made it evident that the qualities of the new man had only been achieved, if at all, through outward pressure and had only gained passive acceptance, the Soviet leadership was faced with the problem of remobilizing (and resocializing?) youth into active support of current economic and political policies.



There seems little doubt that the revival of the new man theme was at least initially seen as a measure whereby youth's enthusiasm could be controlled and directed toward desirable goals.

By the late 1950s, the Party began implementing a number of measures directly aimed at the economic and social "sins" of youth, which, according to a lead Pravda article, were: a negative attitude toward labor; admiration of Western culture; and disregard for Komsomol work.<sup>25</sup> During the next few years, the Party sought to change or destroy these tendencies through a variety of legal and social pressures. In the process of applying these pressures, there "evolved" a set of standards and rules of behaviour which were to form the "moral code" of the "new Soviet man". The word "evolved" is used cautiously, for the development of the moral code was more deliberate than incremental.

The constituent elements of the moral code, when developed, included both ethical and legal standards. The latter, however, were in some ways designed primarily as ad hoc measures aimed at improving contemporary problems rather than as components of an overall socialization scheme. They provided, nevertheless, the behavioral frame of reference for the subsequent moral code. To put it more simply,

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<sup>25</sup>"Vazhnaia zadacha nashei obshchestvennost'", Pravda, June 15, 1968, p. 1.



the legal measures promulgated in the late 1950s made explicit those qualities which the "new man" was not to possess. These qualities were precisely those exhibited by youth during the de-Stalinization period: contempt for manual labour; idleness; parasitism; and indifference to both political and economic questions.

Viewed as constituent parts of a moral code, the legal measures were "negative" and indirect. Both the School Reforms of 1958 and the Anti-parasite decrees fall within this category.

Before discussing the School Reforms, it should be noted that, to Soviet authorities, education is, and has always been used as, a political weapon. Educational authorities are expected to instill youth with the political and social values of the system. Among the latter is the inculcation of respect for manual labor, usually referred to as the "socialist attitude toward labor". When it appeared that higher education was in fact promoting contempt for labor, the Soviet leadership -- especially Khrushchev -- felt that education would have to be more closely linked with "life", that is, labor, if it was to be successful in bringing up good workers.

The School Reforms of 1958 were aimed primarily at those attempting to avoid manual labor by entering university in the hope of securing a comfortable future.<sup>26</sup> Henceforth,

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<sup>26</sup>There were of course many other reasons for the







up to 80% of those admitted to the universities were to have worked for two years. This meant that secondary school graduates would have to find a job before applying for university. This was seen as one way to change the attitude of those who felt that they "didn't study for ten years in order to dig around in manure."<sup>27</sup>

The regime's concern over these attitudes was reflected in the fact that the school reforms were first outlined at the 13th Komsomol Congress (1958) by Khrushchev himself. Khrushchev openly stated that the reforms were designed to force young people to take up physical labor.

. . . young men and women after finishing the ten-year school do not willingly go into factories and mills, kolkhozes and sovkhoses, but regard such a thing as beneath their dignity.<sup>28</sup>

. . . even in some cases [young people] prefer to do nothing at all, that is, [they] are. . . parasites on socialist society.<sup>29</sup>

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reforms, such as the desire to increase the work force. The hope to change youth's attitudes by forcing them to work, however, was the most important in terms of socialization.

<sup>27</sup>Sem'ia i shkola, No. 4 (1958); quoted in Yuri Marin, "Soviet Youth and the Reform in Secondary and Higher Education", Bulletin, V: 7 (July, 1958), p. 31.

<sup>28</sup>N.S. Khrushchev, Vospityvat' aktivnykh i soznatel'nykh stroitelei kommunisticheskogo obshchestva (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1958), pp. 12-14.

<sup>29</sup>KP, June 8, 1958; as quoted in Yuri Marin, "Soviet Youth and Reform. . . .", op. cit., p. 31.



To start off the campaign of inducing youth to take a more socialist attitude towards labor, Khrushchev introduced a new model of the ideal youth at this 13th Congress. He lauded the achievements of one Nikolai Chikirev who had left school during the war, worked at a factory, and received his degree in engineering through night school. This was followed by a press campaign in the Komsomol central newspaper, which printed a picture of Chikirev along with an article on his life.<sup>30</sup> Little has since been heard of this youth hero.

The promulgation of various anti-parasite decrees during the late 1950s was another important element in that complex of legal and ethical standards by which the "new man" was to live.<sup>31</sup> Primarily designed to mobilize the general population, and the Komsomol in particular, against idlers, hooligans, parasites and non-conformists in general, these decrees were also considered (theoretically at least) as a method whereby the average citizen would gain practical experience in the type of self-activity which would help foster the qualities of the new man. This, of course, was neither an explicit nor an immediate goal. The short-term goal was the effort to involve the citizen in the policing

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<sup>30</sup>KP, June 12, 1958, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup>See Chapter IV.



of his own area, thereby creating, it was hoped, a wide consensus which would eventually force -- through social pressure and legal deterrent -- the wrongdoers to change their ways. Power of banishing the "criminal" to forced labor for five years was given to "general meetings" of citizens in the area in which he lived. The experiment, however, proved unsuccessful by 1961, and jurisdiction over parasites and hooligans was restored to the regular courts. The harsh sanctions, however, remained in force.

If the school reforms and the anti-parasite decrees were only ad hoc responses to immediate problems and eventually served only a negative and indirect role in the upbringing of the new Soviet man, this was clearly not the case with the Communist Labor Brigades. According to the Komsomol press, this new form of "communist competition" (as opposed to socialist -- thereby implying that a new level had been reached) grew out of Komsomol participation in the nation-wide discussion of the current Seven-Year Plan. A group of Komsomol and other youths in a roller-bearing shop of a Moscow factory had set up a "labor brigade" in November of 1958.<sup>32</sup> By the next day, Komsomol'skaia pravda spoke of these brigades as if they were already well

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<sup>32</sup>KP, November 18, 1958; cited in A. Poplujko, "The Communist Labor Brigades", Bulletin, VI: 2 (February, 1959), p. 12.



established. A resolution on this movement was passed by the Komsomol Central Committee shortly thereafter, along with instructions to the local Komsomol organizations urging "Komsomol committees to support and spread this valuable initiative among Komsomolites and youth in production, transport, and construction enterprises, kolkhozes, sovkhozes" and other institutions.<sup>33</sup> On the same day, the Komsomol Central Committee issued another resolution urging the revival of the "unskilled production brigades" which were organized in 1955 in various schools of the Stavropol Krai.<sup>34</sup> Both the speed and uniformity of the "communist brigade" movement, as well as the revival of the "unskilled" brigades, however, suggested that the Komsomol had received instructions from above.

Although it was admitted that the communist labor brigades drew their inspiration from Khrushchev's theses for the 21st Congress",<sup>35</sup> this movement was widely acclaimed

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<sup>33</sup>"O novom patrioticheskom dvizhenii komsomol'tsev i molodezhi po sozdaniu i razvertyvaniu sorevnovaniia brigad kommunisticheskogo truda, Postanovlenie biuro TsK VLKSM 21 noiabria 1958 goda", Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1959), II: 803.

<sup>34</sup>"O rabote uchenicheskikh proizvodstvennykh brigad, Postanovlenie biuro TsK VLKSM 21 noiabria 1958 goda", ibid., II: 798-799.

<sup>35</sup>The 21st Congress had of course not as yet convened. Khrushchev had, however, outlined a series of theses on the control figures of the Seven-Year Plan, which were published







as the result of the self-initiative not only of Komsomolites but other youths as well. The involvement of non-Komsomol youth was especially stressed, perhaps to avoid the impression that the brigades were only one more Komsomol campaign.

There were no hidden motives in the revival of the unskilled brigades. The Komsomol resolution clearly stated that the significance of these brigades was especially important "in connection with party and government measures for the strengthening of the ties between school and life."<sup>36</sup>

Their real significance, however, lay in the anticipated success they were to achieve in the correct upbringing and socialization of youth:

Already the first results of the work of the unskilled production brigades testifies to their large role in the preparation of students for labor, [and] in the training of a sense of comradeship, collectivism, [and] the raising of vigilance [boevitost'], self-activity and initiative in the work of Komsomol organizations within the school.<sup>37</sup>

Not only was there a connection made between productive work and the instilling of certain ethical qualities, but this connection was seen as operational and successful.

The Communist Labor Brigade movement was also seen

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in the Soviet press on November 14, 1958 -- just four days before the appearance of the Communist Labor Brigades.

<sup>36</sup>"O rabote uchenicheskikh. . . .", op. cit., II: 798.

<sup>37</sup>Loc. cit.



in terms of the anticipated success in instilling ethical and moral standards. Just three days after the latter's establishment, the Komsomol was urging the proliferation of a set of "voluntarily-derived" ethical standards. The basic elements of these "commandments" [zapovedy] would soon be incorporated into the "moral code of the builders of communism". As outlined in November of 1958, the former were:

- (1) Work on a high productional level, continuously perfecting the technological, automational and mechanical processes of production; strive to work better, with less waste and to achieve higher quality and lower cost-prices in goods. . . .
- (2) Have a communist attitude towards labor, for labor should not only be a means for existence, but [also] a physical and spiritual need. . . .
- (3) Constantly study. Strive to master modern ways of thinking, attain the heights of socialist culture, be an example worthy of emulation in production and in life.
- (4) Constantly raise [your] work qualifications, [and] general educational and political level.
- (5) The law of the brigade -- one for all and all for one.
- (6) . . . instill in oneself and one's comrades the<sup>38</sup> qualities of membership in a communist society.

The labor brigades were lauded at the 21st Party Congress, but the ethical code was not mentioned.<sup>39</sup> In his

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<sup>38</sup>"O novom patrioticheskom dvizhenii. . . .", op. cit., II: 802-803. The "commandments" are not numbered or given in this order in the original.

<sup>39</sup>Semichastny claimed that "more than 35,000 working groups of young people" had joined the communist labor brigade by January of 1959. "Speech by Comrade V. Ye Semichastny. . . .", Pravda, Jan. 30, 1959, p. 3; trans. in



speech to the 21st Congress, Khrushchev was instead concerned with stressing his favourite idea:

Upbringing must above all be organically linked with life, with production. . . . The Party makes. . . the development of a conscious, communist attitude to work the focus of all its educational activity. We want work -- the source of all material and cultural benefits -- to become a prime, vital necessity of people.<sup>40</sup>

By the 22nd Party Congress, held two years later, Khrushchev supplemented his ideas on production, education, and life with the introduction of "the moral code of the builders of communism." To a great extent, this moral code had incorporated the qualities promoted in the above-mentioned measures. It was also similar to the qualities of youth as expressed in a public opinion poll in 1960.<sup>41</sup> The Party now began referring to the "new man" and his upbringing according to this code, which was included in the 1961 Party Program, the new Party Statutes (Article 59, paragraph "h"), and the new Komsomol Statutes of 1962. It consisted of

- (1) Devotion to the cause of communism, love of the socialist homeland, of the socialist countries;
- (2) Conscientious labor for the good of society: He who does not work, neither shall he eat;
- (3) Concern on the part of everyone for the preservation and growth of public wealth;

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Current Soviet Policies III: The Documentary Record of the Extraordinary 21st Communist Party Congress (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 87.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 54 [my italics.]

<sup>41</sup>See Chapter V.





- (4) A high sense of public duty, intolerance of violations of the public interest;
- (5) Collectivism and comradely mutual assistance: One for all and all for one;
- (6) Humane relations and mutual respect among people: Man is to man a friend, comrade and brother;
- (7) Honesty and truthfulness, moral purity, guilelessness and modesty in public and private life;
- (8) Mutual respect in the family and concern for the upbringing of children;
- (9) An uncompromising attitude to injustice, parasitism, dishonesty, careerism and money-grubbing;
- (10) Friendship and brotherhood of all peoples of the USSR, intolerance of national and racial animosity;
- (11) An uncompromising attitude to the enemies of communism, peace and friendship of peoples;
- (12) Fraternal solidarity with the working people of all countries and with all peoples.<sup>42</sup>

These were the principles of communist morality and of the desired industrial man. The task that lay before the Party was the transformation of man himself. How was this to be achieved?

In general terms, the Soviet leadership approached this problem in the same manner as in the past. The desired behavioural patterns were to be instilled through institutional pressure: little attention was to be given to inner motivation.

For Khrushchev, the key concept in the molding of the new Soviet man was still the link between education and behaviour.

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<sup>42</sup>Current Soviet Policies IV: The Documentary Record of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 27-28.





What tasks do we have in mind when we speak of the molding of the new man? . . .

While inculcating the new communist traits of character in all members of our society, the Party attaches particular importance to the communist upbringing and education of youth. . . . The generation of communism must be molded from childhood, must be. . . tempered in youth. . . .

The basis of communist education, of the all-round development of the individual, is creative labor. . . .

. . . Communist education [must] . . . instill in everyone the firm realization that man cannot live without working. . . . All the good that Soviet man does he does for himself and for society as a whole. . . .

Our task is to see that the new moral requirements [in the "moral code"] become an inner need for all Soviet people.<sup>43</sup>

This "inner need", however, was to be achieved through a variety of outer pressures:

The molding of the new man is influenced not only by the educational work of the Party, the Soviet state, the trade unions and the Young Communist League but by the entire pattern of society's life: the mode of production, forms of distribution, everyday services, social and political activities, legal regulations and judicial practice. All economic, social, political and legal levers must be used to develop people's communist consciousness. . . .<sup>44</sup>

Some of the levers mentioned here by Khrushchev were already in existence: the School Reforms and the Parasite Decrees were both legal and social measures; the Communist Labor Brigades were both an economic and social lever. A massive ideological campaign had also been in force since 1959.

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 104-105.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 104.



Beginning in 1959, the Komsomol was called upon to intensify its work in ideology and political indoctrination. This effort was undertaken for two immediate reasons: (1) to "strengthen the ties between school and life" (by guiding students and other youths into production channels through oral agitation, propaganda, and the establishment of technical study circles)<sup>45</sup>; and (2) to "bring up the man of the future" (through an expanding network of seminars and study circles providing political and economic education).<sup>46</sup>

Despite the growing contempt among youth for political education by means of didactic agitation and propaganda, Komsomol officials continued to laud its effectiveness as a "powerful means of bringing up the man of the future". A number of seminars and study groups were set up "in which young men and women study the history of the Communist Party, master the theory of Marxism-Leninism, and heighten their political awareness."<sup>47</sup> This type of approach was certainly

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<sup>45</sup>See, for instance, "Ob uchastii komsomol'skikh organizatsii v vypolnenii zakona 'Ob ukreplenii svyazi shkoly s zhizn'iu i o dal'neishem razvitii sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia v SSSR', Postanovlenie IV plenuma TsK VLKSM, 26 fevralia 1959 goda", Spravochnik. . . ., op. cit., II: 818-830.

<sup>46</sup>On this general topic, see Ellen P. Mickiewicz, Soviet Political Schools (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

<sup>47</sup>"Moguchee sredstvo vospitaniia cheloveka budushchego", KP, September 4, 1959, p. 2; trans. in CDSP, XI: 35 (September 30, 1959), pp. 9-10.



not new, and it was unlikely to gain many voluntary recruits.

Realizing that a more palatable method of propaganda was needed in order to appeal to youth, the Party attempted the "discussion" method. This involved allowing study groups more flexibility in their choice of topic, but it also risked giving official sanction to some degree of spontaneous, and hence dangerous, discussion. The Party nevertheless continued to view the discussion method as one way of overcoming propaganda's "detachment from life." Both teachers and propagandists, however, were reluctant to use this method, for they had not been accustomed to dealing with "awkward" questions. This occasioned considerable disruptions, especially in the schools.<sup>48</sup>

One method of open discussion which became popular during the early 1960s was the public debate. These were usually conducted on topics of current interest or of local (and national) concern. This was one more method of mobilizing youth into discussing questions of official importance. Even the best-staged debates, however, were often difficult to control. A huge Komsomol debate in March of 1961, for instance, provided the forum for the expression of critical

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<sup>48</sup>For an examination of the disruptive results of the discussion method in the schools, see Pavel Urban, "Longings for 'Bourgeois Liberties'", Youth in Ferment (Munich: Institute for the Study of the USSR, 1962), Series I, No. 66, pp. 83-90.





opinions and served little propaganda value.<sup>49</sup>

It is important to note that the public debates were sponsored by official institutions and were probably meant to counteract and provide an alternative to the spontaneous youth debates taking place throughout the country. As such, they were compelled to elicit some sort of appeal to youth -- which required a modicum of free expression. Yet their very existence also indicated that the regime felt it necessary to measure the real opinions of youth.

A similar reason seems to underly the establishment of the Institute of Public Opinion of Komsomol'skaia pravda in May of 1960.<sup>50</sup> Although the first polls of this institute suffered from crude sampling techniques, the very fact that polls were taken denied that there was complete congruence on all questions. It indicated that Soviet leaders wanted to know their society better and thereby reduce the need to rely on coercion.

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<sup>49</sup>This debate, on "The Psychology of Modern Youth", was an extension of the discussion club, "Life and I", and was sponsored by Komsomol'skaia pravda. After six hours of fervent discussion, the debate was closed with the promise that it would be continued in the columns of Komsomol'skaia pravda. Little more was heard of it. For an English translation of the article in KP, April 15, 1961, which reported the debate, see The Soviet Review, II: 6 (June, 1961), pp. 22-38.

<sup>50</sup>See Chapter V.





By the beginning of the 1960s, then, the regime had responded to the troublesome youth situation with a variety of measures. On the surface, the legal, social, political, and economic "levers" applied between 1958 and 1962 seemed to be responses to a number of contemporary problems primarily within the youth strata of the population. The role of these measures in the formation of the "moral code" and the fostering of a new man, however, suggests that they were coordinated efforts.

The real problem for Soviet society was not the formation of a communist man, unless the latter term is considered only in its economic aspects. The real problem lay in the mobilization of the population -- and especially youth, for it was the most reluctant -- for productive efficiency. The Soviet economy was lagging in the latter half of the 1950s. The Soviet leadership, particularly Khrushchev, sought to restore vitality to the economic sector through the inculcation of qualities which stressed economic efficiency and work incentive. The "moral code of the builders of communism" may thus be seen as a nonmaterial economic incentive. In short, it was a moral code of "builders" before it was a moral code of "communists".

#### Some Areas of Komsomol Activity in the Shaping of the New Man

Since the moral code and the promotion of the "new



man" were primarily directed at youth, the Komsomol was naturally called upon to play a significant role in this area. Much of this task was not new, for the Komsomol had been long involved in mobilizing youth for economic and social tasks.

The stress on rearing the new man prompted the intensification of the Komsomol's function in construction and work projects, such as, for instance, the Virgin Lands campaign. Komsomol leaders urged youth to "apply all their energy to creating the material and technical base of communism" and to strive for higher labor productivity.<sup>51</sup> The Komsomol never tired of boasting that it had built so-many blast furnaces or completed so-many construction sites. The organization's leaders loyally reiterated the Party's call for youth to work on farms, livestock sectors, or to help in fulfilling any new agricultural or industrial campaign. Judging from Komsomol statistics, these campaigns were highly successful in the number of volunteers who went to the Far North and Central Asia.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Pavlov's report to the 14th Komsomol Congress, *Pravda*, April 17, 1962, p. 2; trans. in *CDSP*, XIV: 15 (May 9, 1962), p. 3.

<sup>52</sup>Pavlov reported at the 14th Komsomol Congress that 3 1/2 million young people were working in construction sites in the Far North and Central Asia. Of these, 8,000 were awarded honours and medals, and 30 received the Hero of Socialist Labor award. He also reported that two million young people had gone to work in livestock sectors and that



The social aspect of the campaign, however, did not prove as successful. Youth continued in the pattern established during the 1950s: they criticized the Komsomol, remained apolitical and apathetic, and were still reluctant to accept certain job assignments. Incidences of hooligan and parasitic behaviour became more numerous; the drinking problem became more acute.

Theoretically, these expressions of "deviant" behaviour fell within the realm of Komsomol activity in promoting better cultural and social conditions. They were not new problems, but were now more important because of the economic inefficiency they caused.

As the majority of hooligan and drunken behaviour occurred during "leisure" time, the regime decided to pay more attention in directing leisure time activities into more productive channels.

In order to understand the Soviet concern with leisure time, it must be understood that leisure time, in the Soviet Union, is not supposed to be idle time. All non-socially productive activity is divided into three categories: non-working time (which includes all activities other than formal labor for the state); free time (which includes time for study, voluntary organizations, and hobbies); and finally, "leisure", which is one of the "activities"

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29,000 girls, 11,000 "young builders", and 36,000 graduates of higher schools had gone to the Virgin Lands in the past 4 years. Ibid., pp. 3-4.



of free time.<sup>53</sup> Soviet authorities argued that the individual had to be shown how to use his free time in order to prevent idleness.

The control of leisure time had long been a function of the Komsomol. Its various voluntary associations and brigades, such as the "light cavalry" squads, not only performed useful economic and social control functions, but also served as a convenient method of keeping young people occupied in acceptable activities in their free time.<sup>54</sup>

The People's Guards [druzhiny], established in 1959 to help the militia apprehend hooligans and parasites, performed a similar function. There seems little doubt that the increased Komsomol involvement in campaigns of this nature was designed to "kill two birds with one stone": (1) raise productivity and increase economic efficiency by attacking the sources of waste; (2) rejuvenate the Komsomol by involving it in more practical tasks.

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<sup>53</sup>Paul Hollander, "The Dilemmas of Soviet Sociology", PoC, XIV: 6 (November-December, 1965), p. 40. Hollander quotes these concepts from G.S. Petrosian, V nerabochee vremia trudiashchikhsia v SSSR (Moscow: Ekonomika, 1965), pp. 179-180.

<sup>54</sup>There were also at this time various voluntary associations within a "culture campaign". Youths would roam the streets in search of people who were dressed shabbily or behaved "poorly". Campaigns against specific cultural developments were also common. "Music" patrols would often condemn places where "jazz" was played or severely criticize a composer.







On the surface, the number of youths who worked in construction, agriculture, industry, and devoted their leisure time to voluntary associations seemed to indicate the success of the campaign to develop a new Soviet man. Soviet youth, however, had not internalized the qualities they outwardly showed.

On the one hand, a Komsomolite, according to the moral code, had to show sentiment and emotion. He was to be brave, generous, energetic, athletic, optimistic, and a believer in progress and change. Yet, on the other hand, he was to be unobjective (by accepting only the Party's point of view), intolerant of others' "incorrect" views, and aggressive towards deviant behaviour. For some, this led to a "dual psychology", in which "people express one opinion on many heated issues to their family and intimate friends, but speak up with exactly the opposite views at meetings."<sup>55</sup>

To some Soviet commentators, youth's continuing demand for consumer goods and contempt for manual labor were indications of a conflict between the generations. Although the Party denied that such a conflict was possible under socialism, it did admit that modern youth did not have a correct perspective on its role in society because

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<sup>55</sup>KP, December 27, 1964; quoted in Analysis of Current Developments in the Soviet Union [Newsletter of the Institute for the Study in the USSR], No. 38 (1964/65).



it had not been tempered through the revolutionary or the war experience. To the Party, this situation should be remedied by glorifying the past as an example for emulation.

The "generation gap", however, had once been useful to the Party. Initially expressed as one of difference in taste in clothes, literature, and music, it had helped youth break out of the pattern set by Stalin. Yet once youth realized how estranged they were from the ideals of their fathers, they became disillusioned and cynical. For the young, de-Stalinization was not a break with the past, but the beginning of a new life. To them, it was not a question of economics or politics, but one of morality.<sup>56</sup>

It was apparent by the middle of the 1960s that Soviet youth, whether in the Komsomol or not, were unwilling to relinquish the freedom they had gained in the previous decade. The Party seemed equally determined to raise productivity and foster the molding of a new (industrial) man, largely through channeling youth's ambitious hopes into useful and efficient labor. The increase in social problems, however, demonstrated that, although mobilizing tactics were relatively successful in rallying youth, this

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<sup>56</sup>This was outlined in the much disputed novel of V. Aksenov, "Ticket to the Stars", in which Aksenov praised rebellious youths for being more honest than Party members and the "establishment" in general. This story appeared in Iunost, Nos. 6 and 7 (1961).



had been done at the expense of neglecting political education. There seems to have been some realization that education through activity, that is, through involvement in campaigns, was insufficient.

### The Shift in Emphasis After 1965

Despite the massive effort of the regime to increase productive efficiency through nonmaterial incentives by stimulating Komsomol activities and the promotion of the "new man", it appeared by the mid-1960s that these measures were proving inadequate. The Party leadership now began to consider newer methods of improving production, such as the limited use of the profit incentive.

The failure of the economy, and in particular the 1959-1965 Seven-Year Plan, was probably a significant factor in the fall of Khrushchev in October of 1964. With Khrushchev fell many of his organizational reforms, such as the division of the Party into industrial and agricultural sectors.

The new Party leadership seemed determined to face the chronic economic problems more realistically and promised increased material incentives. In the social sphere, great emphasis was now placed on a more "scientific" approach to social problems. The year 1965 saw the birth of sociology as a separate discipline. There also seems to have been a shift in the regime's perception of the Komsomol's role in



society: emphasis was now placed on the Komsomol's alternate function as a teacher and communicator of political ideals. The question lay, however, in whether this re-emphasis would occasion a major change in Komsomol tactics (now that it was realized that the mobilizing strategy was insufficient), or whether, in stressing the "psychological" rather than "economic" qualities of the new man, the Komsomol would continue to employ the didactic "big-brother-knows-best" approach.

Komsomol activity within the last half of the 1960s fell largely within three areas: (1) the improvement of political education among youth; (2) reorganization; and (3) the improvement of Komsomol direction of the Young Pioneer organization. None of these programs was new; they had all been attempted in the past. They were nevertheless significant, for their content showed a shift of emphasis from (or at least an addition to) the traditional principles of Soviet upbringing: the inculcation of patriotic qualities were now given at least equal emphasis to the productive.

The earliest of these programs, the improvement of political education, was initiated by the Party. In August of 1965, V. Stepanov, head of the CPSU Central Committee Agitprop Department, expressed concern over the political education of young people. He urged that the Komsomol aktiv study together with the Party in order to develop







skill in propaganda work.<sup>57</sup>

A few weeks later, Pavlov, in a major article in Pravda, repeated many of Stepanov's suggestions and then proceeded to outline the nature of the Komsomol's task in this area. Most importantly, Pavlov asserted that "the Komsomol is a political organization. . . ." Although he noted that the Komsomol "has no right to stand aside [from]. . . the struggle for labor productivity", he hinted that the organization should stop its interference in production:

It is now more obvious than ever that attempts by Young Communists to assume the role of 'production expeditors'. . . -- in short, to undertake some of the functions of economic managers -- limited the possibility of purposeful ideological training of youth.<sup>58</sup>

In regard to the "new man", Pavlov made a distinction between his formation and the accomplishment of economic tasks (Khrushchev had always made a connection):

. . . It must be borne in mind that the formation of the new man. . . is not a simple matter; as life shows, it is even more difficult than the accomplishment of economic tasks.<sup>59</sup>

Although the reemphasis on political education prompted a shift in the role of the Komsomol in Soviet

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<sup>57</sup>Pravda, August 4, 1965, p. 2; trans. in CDSP, XVII: 31 (August 25, 1965), p. 3.

<sup>58</sup>Pravda, August 29, 1965, p. 3; trans. in CDSP, XVII: 35 (September 22, 1965), p. 14.

<sup>59</sup>Loc cit.



society, it may also be argued that this shift was a simple swing of the pendulum from production to education tasks. The Komsomol, after all, was called upon to tone down its role in stimulating production so it could spend more time in explaining to young people how they were an important part of the production process. It seemed significant, however, that the Party no longer considered labor to be in itself a sufficient method of political education.<sup>60</sup> All of these exhortations, nevertheless, did not promise a new method. Official statements asserting that "it would be a big mistake to think that the very fact of living in the land of the Soviets, in conditions of socialist reality, presupposes a communist world outlook in the young person" only signified that more attention would be paid to inculcating a desirable Weltanschauung.<sup>61</sup> This did not promise a new method. Political education continued to be conducted through study circles and seminars and through the use of professional agitators. The subjects were the same -- the

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<sup>60</sup>This, however, did not mean that production matters were to be neglected. Note, for instance, this statement made by M. Khaldeev, Head of the Agitprop Department of the RSFSR: ". . . the labor process in itself does not provide revolutionary tempering if the ideological content of production matters is not disclosed and interpreted. . . ." Pravda, November 28, 1965, p. 2; trans. in CDSP, XVII: 48 (December 22, 1965), p. 5 [my italics].

<sup>61</sup>Pavlov's report to the 8th Plenary Session of the Komsomol Central Committee, KP, December 29, 1965, p. 3; trans. in CDSP, XVIII: 1 (January 26, 1966), p. 9.



history of the CPSU, current Party policies, Marxism-Leninism -- and they were presented in the same manner. Perhaps the only real difference from the past was the increasing stress on patriotic education, which will be dealt with later in the chapter.

The second major program of the mid-1960s dealt with the revitalization of the Komsomol organization. Criticism of Komsomol meetings and activities had continued to rise during the early years of the decade to such an extent that top Komsomol officials were forced to comment on it. Pavlov, for instance, in keeping with the usual practice of singling out a particular area as a warning to others, severely criticized the stultification of Komsomol work in Moldavia:

It has substituted speechifying, paper work, and crude administration for effective aid. . . . In 1962 alone, 325 questions were discussed. . . and 141 Resolutions were sent to the local organizations. In the first four months of this year more than 20 Conferences and rallies of every sort and kind were held . . . to which hundreds of Komsomol members were called. Penalties were imposed on almost all officials of the city and village Komsomol organizations. What sense is there in this administrative passion, where are the results. . .? <sup>62</sup>

This type of procedure, however, was well engrained in Komsomol officials: it had been the practice for years.

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<sup>62</sup>S.P. Pavlov, "Vospitat' ubezhdennykh stoikikh bortsov za kommunizm!", KP, July 10, 1963, p. 4; trans. in CDSP, XV: 29 (August 14, 1963), p. 19.





There were, nevertheless, many indications that Party and Komsomol officials were sincerely concerned with improving Komsomol organizational work and allowing some significant participation at the local level.<sup>63</sup>

Beginning in June of 1965, the Komsomol issued a series of resolutions, based on the "October [1964] and subsequent plena of the CPSU Central Committee", dealing with the improvement of organizational work. Although the four resolutions on this topic between June and December of 1965 did not call for any stunning reversal of past methods, they did urge a less administrative and more practical approach to Komsomol activity.<sup>64</sup> It was probably hoped that such an approach would encourage Komsomol members to take a more active part in the organization.

In the attempt to strengthen the Komsomol leadership and to ensure rank-and-file participation, a number of

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<sup>63</sup>V. Polianchko, Chief of the Komsomol Central Committee Department on Organization, for instance, suggested that more open discussion on the agenda for local Komsomol meetings should take place before the meeting. "Trinadtsat' sutok na sobraniakh", Molodoi kommunist, No. 2 (February, 1965), pp. 42-48.

<sup>64</sup>These resolutions dealt with organizational work in the inculcation of labor values through political education, the improvement of the use of the theater in the rearing of youth, the raising of the quality of productive work, and the work of the Belorussian Communist Party in the rearing of youth. See Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika, op. cit., VI [1966]: 499-532.





administrative changes were made in quick succession in 1966. First, the restrictions on serving consecutive terms in local offices were lifted, in the hope that experienced people would remain in their positions. Secondly, those who recommended new members were to be held responsible for the latter's performance.<sup>65</sup> Thirdly, the Party resolved at its 23rd Congress that young people under 23 could join the Party only through the Komsomol. Fourthly, the Komsomol called for the re-issue of membership cards in 1967, the first such move in 11 years.<sup>66</sup> This exchange of cards, however, was not to be a purge: it was rather to be used as an attempt to instill enthusiasm and activism in the members (that is, the fear of losing membership might activate those who were usually idle) and to gain a more realistic count of actual membership.<sup>67</sup>

Improvement of Komsomol leadership of the Young Pioneer Organization was the third major program of the 1960s.

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<sup>65</sup>See William M. Jackson, "Young Soviets and an Aging Komsomol", in Denis Dirscherl, The New Russia (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum Press, 1968), p. 57.

<sup>66</sup>The last exchange of cards, in 1956, was also used to revitalize, not to purge, the organization.

<sup>67</sup>The Chuvash organization, for example, was warned not to use the exchange of cards to expel members without justification. A similar criticism was leveled against the Yakutsk Komsomol. KP, March 7, 1967, p. 1.



This subject was not a new one, for the Komsomol's "shortcomings" in Pioneer work had long been noted, with periodic resolutions urging improvement.<sup>68</sup> That the Party took a more serious attitude to the problem than in the past was evidenced by the increasing press coverage it received during 1965 and 1966. Both Brezhnev at the 23rd Party Congress and Pavlov at the 15th Komsomol Congress (both in 1966) gave special emphasis to improving the rearing of young children.

Since 1966, the Party's (and Komsomol's) ambitious youth indoctrination campaign has laid increasing stress upon "military-patriotic" education. The resolution of the February 1967 plenum of the Komsomol, for instance, stressed the military aspect of the Pioneer program, in which the Komsomol had to inculcate the Pioneers with love for the Soviet army, improve their training in defense of the "Socialist Fatherland", and imbue them with filial devotion to the homeland.<sup>69</sup>

Military training and paramilitary drill had been

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<sup>68</sup> Similar complaints were expressed in 1925, 1929, 1934, and 1957. For the first three years, see KPSS O Komsomole. . . , op. cit., pp. 128-132, 214-215, and 271-272, respectively. For the 1957 resolution, see Yuri Marin, "Current Komsomol Problems", Bulletin, IV: 12 (December, 1957), pp. 38-42.

<sup>69</sup> "O dal'neishem uluchshenii deiatel'nosti VLKSM po rukovodstvu Vsesoiuznoi pionerskoi organizatsiei imeni V.I. Lenina, Postanovlenie II plenuma Tsk VLKSM 3 fevralia 1967 goda", Spravochnik. . . , op. cit., VII: 428-440.



important during the 1930s and the early 40s, but was neglected during the 1950s.<sup>70</sup> Official statements on the need for a more patriotic upbringing began to reappear in connection with the "moral code" and was considered an important quality of the "new man". Military and patriotic training were usually referred to within the context of reviving past heroism or the need to guard against the infiltration of bourgeois propaganda.

This campaign should be viewed from the perspective of the appeal it was bound to generate among young children, who were only too willing to play military games, help "defend the border", or build model airplanes and battleships.

The basis of military-patriotic training took place in paramilitary summer camps, "military-technical" sports, and various voluntary clubs and associations. The most important of these organizations was DOSAAF, a contraction of the Russian for The Voluntary Association for Cooperation with the Army, Air-Force, and Navy [Dobrovol'noe obshchestvo sodeistviia armii, aviatsii, i flotu]. DOSAAF was established in 1951 and has since been steadily growing in membership, which is now in the "tens of millions".<sup>71</sup> Basically a civil

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<sup>70</sup>See Ina Schlesinger, The Pioneer Organization. . . ., op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>71</sup>For a general treatment of this topic, see M. Andreev, "Military Training of the Soviet Population", Bulletin, VI:



defense organization, it includes all age levels, but is especially aimed at youth of the Komsomol age range. In this regard, it prepares youth for service in the armed forces and helps to train specialists.

The Pioneer part of this campaign has been greatly intensified since 1965. One of the main methods by which it was hoped to create the desired patriotic qualities was by involving the young children in the glorious episodes of the past. There were countless meetings with old Bolsheviks and war veterans, visits to museums, films, slides, and lectures. The physical exercise aspect of the program used promotional devices such as badges (for example, the "Ready for the Defense of the Fatherland" badge), bonuses, uniforms, drums, and torches. The main device was the "march", followed by a rally of the "conquerors" (i.e. those who finished the march). The marches generally followed the "paths of the revolution" or the war, and offered enough obstacles to be challenging. In addition, Pioneer camps have recently been run along strict military lines, with children wearing camouflaged uniforms and divided into groups with military nomenclatures.<sup>72</sup>

One interesting aspect of the increased stress on patriotism was the Soviet handling of the dispute with the

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10 (October, 1959), pp. 43-46.

<sup>72</sup>Uchitel'skaia gazeta, August 2, 1969, p. 2.







Chinese. During the 1950s, Soviet youth were called upon to admire their Chinese counterparts. Exchanges of students, letters, and congratulations were both numerous and welcomed.<sup>73</sup> Visiting Chinese would often address Komsomol and Pioneer meetings and Chinese letters would often be read at Pioneer camp outings.<sup>74</sup>

The Soviet press, however, began to be silent about the Chinese, especially after some competition within international youth organizations. With the first open break in 1963 over Sinkiang, the press began reprinting Chinese articles which were ridiculous in their asceticism. One such article, on the great Chinese youth hero, Lei Feng, drew this comment from the editors of Komsomol'skaia pravda:

Lei Feng's self-sacrifice is of the nature of a caricature. . . . The [Chinese] newspapers, besides themselves with enthusiasm, laud Lei Feng, for example, for swearing never to ride in a streetcar and to 'give to the revolution' the three fen saved. . . . Youth is expected to be filled with enthusiasm because Lei Feng dug out of a pile of refuse a toothbrush which some one had thrown away and which. . . . 'became as new in his hands'.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>See for instance V. Lopatin, "Velikaia data v istorii kitaiskogo naroda", and M. Borodin and P. Kozlov, "Molodye stroiteli novoi zhizni", Molodoi kommunist, No. 10 (October, 1959), pp. 87-93, and 94-99, respectively. This magazine printed many Soviet and Chinese articles during 1959 and 1960.

<sup>74</sup>Kassof, The Soviet Youth Program, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>75</sup>KP, September 14, 1963; quoted in S. Voronitsyn, "Soviet Youth and the Sino-Soviet Dispute", Bulletin, XI: 5 (May, 1964), pp. 25-29.



The youth press began at this time to print articles on the problems Soviet students faced while studying in China, which described wild Chinese fanatics and the terrible repression within the universities.

To connect these developments with the stress on patriotism, it should be remembered that internationalism and comradeship have no place within the military-patriotic upbringing of youth: the stress is primarily upon nationalism. Defense of the Fatherland, after all, begs the question, "defense against whom?" Recent Komsomol and Pioneer involvement with the Border Guards can hardly be construed as defending the country against capitalists. In fact, it may be argued that the dispute with the Chinese was a distinct advantage in demonstrating the need of civil defense and rallying youth of all ages behind the regime's call for more military training. As such, it served a useful purpose in stimulating both Komsomol and Pioneer activities.

The 1969 incidents on the Urruri River served similar purposes. They once again demonstrated, as the Soviet press asserted, that China was bent on aggression and that young people should be prepared to fight.<sup>76</sup> The youth press even referred to the threat of the "hysterical crowds of

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<sup>76</sup>For an interesting account of the Soviet press on the border incidences, see Yuri Marin, "The Sino-Soviet Conflict Enters a New Phase", ACDSU, No. 548 (May 13, 1969), 3 pp.



Red Guardists." These incidents thus provided a rationale for both military training and showed the need for the intensive settling of the Siberian borderlands. It may even be suggested that the Soviet leadership welcomed the skirmishes to the extent that it furthered the Komsomol's military program.

Whatever the particular problems faced or the programs developed, the mid-1960s were a period in which some attention was given to making the Komsomol a more vital organization. To a considerable extent, this was the result of de-emphasizing Komsomol involvement in pure economic tasks. Although the importance of productive efficiency was in no way neglected in the subsequent political indoctrination campaign, priority was given to "patriotic-military" training. In short, the Komsomol's function in production was supplanted by its function in political and patriotic education. In the process, it tightened its organization and gave more attention to its younger members and the Pioneers. It should be emphasized, however, that the shift in its subject of concentration, although seemingly a reversal of its role since 1958, had several historical precedents. It remained to be seen whether the Komsomol would revert back to its economic role.



## The Current State of the Komsomol

The Komsomol was still plagued in the late 1960s by the same problems it faced earlier in the decade. It was criticized for its boring meetings, the poor quality and enrollment of its political education program, its lack of appeal among youth, its poor guidance of the Pioneer organization, and its arbitrary election procedures.

It indeed seems incredible that the Komsomol could even survive as an organization, much less increase its membership by 2 million (to 25 million) between 1966 and 1970 in the face of the recurrence of familiar problems. Yet it might be the very recurrence of these problems (which in themselves reflect the consequences of, and perhaps reasons for, the pendulum swing) which keeps the organization alive, for the ability to express grievances in the press is at least an indication that the Komsomol (and the Party) leadership considers them valid. Criticism in the press may in fact be a necessary method of ensuring the dynamism of the organization.

One important development has been the increase in younger members and the relative decrease in adult members. Pavlov reported to the 15th Congress in 1966 that the percentage of members in the under 20 age bracket had "substantially increased", whereas the proportion of Komsomol members aged 18-25 had declined by 23% between 1962 and 1966. By







March of 1970, the Komsomol reported that two-thirds of its membership was under 22.<sup>77</sup> While this development seems to indicate that the Komsomol appeals to the young, it also signified that the older, less impressionable members continue to be disillusioned and drop out of the organization.

There are also some indications that the Party is increasing its control over the Komsomol leadership and local organizations. Pavlov, who had been First Secretary since 1959, was demoted to Chairman of the Central Council of the Union of Sports Societies and Organizations of the USSR in June of 1968. Pavlov, however, was 39 at the time and may have received this position because of his professional background (he studied for five semesters at the Moscow Institute for Physical Culture). His replacement, Evgeny M. Tiazhel'nikov, was previously first secretary of the Cheliabinsk Party Obkom. His election was clearly in violation of the Komsomol rules, which state that high-level Komsomol officers must be members of the Central Committee.

Shortly before this change of leadership, the Party revealed its continuing concern with the ideological wavering of youth by attacking the Krasnoiarsk Krai Party apparatus

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<sup>77</sup>E. Tiazhel'nikov, "Iunost' uchit'sia kommunizmu", Pravda, March 10, 1970, p. 2.



for its poor guidance of the territorial Komsomol organization.<sup>78</sup> This move was no doubt meant to be a warning to other Party organizations.<sup>79</sup> The Krasnoiarsk Party organization was told to improve its work in ideological indoctrination and increase youth membership in discussions, circles, and seminars. The dismissal of the Krai First Secretary in April of 1969 was no doubt linked to this criticism.<sup>80</sup> Even by late 1969, however, the Komsomol of this territory was still being criticized for its crude enrollment methods: reasonable attendance at Komsomol meetings was attempted through withholding factory exit visas until after a meeting, or wages were only paid afterwards.<sup>81</sup> Whatever the problems involved or the solutions adopted, this experiment of more direct Party control bears careful watching. The Party may be weighing the advantages

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<sup>78</sup>"O rabote Krasnoiarskoi Kraevoi organizatsii po rukovodstvu Komsomolom", Partiinaia zhizn', No. 10 (May, 1968), p. 4.

<sup>79</sup>An article in Partiinaia zhizn', for example, complained that "a number of Party committees of the primary Party organizations still have not drawn all the conclusions from the Krasnoiarsk Krai [resolution]. . . ." F. Vinogradov, "Ideinaia zakalka molodezhi", No. 6 (March, 1969), p. 53.

<sup>80</sup>See Michael Ball, "Ferment in the Komsomol: The Krasnoyarsk Krai Komsomol Revisited" Radio Free Europe Newsletter, Communist Area (June 19, 1969), 3 pp.

<sup>81</sup>KP, November 22, 1969, p. 2.



and disadvantages of tighter inter-organizational control of the Komsomol.

Increased concern over youth problems is also shown in other areas. A "Permanent Commission for Youth Affairs" was created by the Supreme Soviet in December of 1968, consisting of federal and union-Republic committees. Numerous social science surveys are also being conducted throughout the USSR.<sup>82</sup>

Beginning in about 1968, the Komsomol has been called upon to increase its involvement in production campaigns. On the occasion of its 50th Anniversary, the Komsomol received its sixth award, the Order of the October Revolution. At the same time, it promised to sponsor "100 highly important national-economic projects."<sup>83</sup>

Brezhnev, speaking at the III Kolkhoz Congress in November of 1969, called upon Komsomolites to go into rural technical professions and lauded the youths who had gone to Siberia. Top-level Komsomol officials are once again urging the Komsomol to play a large role "in the movement for a full use of reserves. . . in the economic realm."<sup>84</sup> Current

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<sup>82</sup>See Chapter V.

<sup>83</sup>E.M. Tiazhel'nikov, "Delu Lenina i partii verny!", Pravda, October 26, 1968, p. 4; trans. in CDSP, XX: 43 (November 13, 1968), p. 9.

<sup>84</sup>E. Tiazhel'nikov, "Iunost'. . . .", op. cit., p. 2.



articles in the youth press, in preparation for the 16th Komsomol Congress in May 1970, continue to stress the Komsomol's role in economic matters. It seems likely that the pendulum will again swing the other way.

### Conclusion

The death of Stalin and the subsequent relaxation of terror occasioned a change in the social and political atmosphere of the Soviet Union. Young people were the first to act upon this change of climate, for to them it was more than the end of an era or the beginning of a new one: it was the beginning of their lives. In condemning the terror and mistakes of the past, the new Soviet leadership inadvertently paved the way for a more realistic appraisal of the present. The initial rising of expectations that this aroused among youth, however, only made the fall into reality more disillusioning.

Youth's disillusionment was reflected in increasing restlessness and rebelliousness, which was particularly evident in the universities. The desire for change also affected the Komsomol, whose organizational structure and arbitrary methods were more fitting of the exigencies of the past. The significance of the criticism within the Komsomol, however, lay not so much in the fact that even Komsomolites were highly critical of their own organization, but that





this criticism was recognized as valid by the Party and Komsomol leadership.

Another factor which influenced the mood of youth at this time was the increase in the number of educated people. Education and the building of socialism had been, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, mutually reinforcing. The situation during the 1950s, however, was entirely different. Education had aroused the expectation in youth that they would occupy the privileged positions in Soviet society. They were reluctant to engage in physical labor and resented having to do so. Rather than work in remote areas, they resorted to gaining a living by menial tasks or illegal activities. This problem was further complicated, in the case of the sons of the new class of technicians and specialists, by the willingness of their parents to support their idleness. Thus they were not forced into channels of occupational achievement in order to gain a living.

Most importantly, the ferment among youth illustrated a serious consequence of the reliance on terror and coercion as the basic methods to achieve conformity. It was evident, during the 1950s, that the Stalinist method of "socialization" was at best inadequate. The problem lay in mobilizing youth for the economy, which could only suffer from youth's reluctance to give priority to labor. The various campaigns at the end of the 1950s which called for the molding of a new man were at least partially



designed to coordinate the regime's hitherto ad hoc responses to problem youth. The Komsomol was again given various mobilization campaigns which would help in not only tightening its own organization but also in gaining control over other youth. The regime, too, was trying to manipulate the human, nonmaterial resources for better productive output.

Having condemned Stalin and his methods, the Party was reluctant to use force to deal with this situation. They had discovered that coercion was an inefficient and inadequate method of instilling political and social consciousness in the population. They were also aware that the educational system and a good education per se were not automatic guarantees that a person would be willing to work in the position chosen for him. The School Reforms of 1958 were at least in part devised as a method by which young people would lose their contempt for manual labor by force of example and thus adopt a more "socialist attitude" toward labor. The reforms were thus seen as useful in both the achievement of conformity and the raising of productivity.

The lessening of coercive methods, however, demanded a corresponding increase in socialization methods. The regime had no easy blueprint to follow for it had not been forced, in the past, to rely on any sophisticated methods of social control. Although it realized that more consideration had to be given to persuasive techniques, it was reluctant to



employ any new methods, other than attempting to "modernize" the existing socialization channels by making them more responsive and appealing.

The basic socialization and mobilization agency for youth was still to be the Komsomol. Embracing less than half the youths in its membership age range, it sought to instill in all youth the officially-accepted qualities. This was again to be achieved through mobilizing tactics, supplemented by propaganda and agitation, control over youth activities, and the setting of a good example, which was handed down from above as the "Moral Code of the Builders of Communism." Although the methods by which this was to be achieved were to be less coercive, the basic framework, that is, mobilization, didactic lecturing, and organizational pressure, was similar to that used in the past. The Komsomol, too, was still closely linked with the Party and loyally mobilized its members in pursuit of current policies.

It soon became evident, however, that youth was unimpressed by the new campaigns. There was still widespread political indifference and apathy despite the school reforms, the anti-parasite decrees, the open discussions, and the use of voluntary organizations.

By the mid-1960s, the Party realized that its approach was not proving successful: the stress on labor



and production goals was not resulting in any decrease of indifference and apathy. This was a significant realization for the Party to make, for it meant that a basic tenet of the socialization approach had been tried and found wanting. The Party then turned to ideology and initiated a major campaign, in which the Komsomol's attention was to be turned toward indoctrination.

While it is true that there is great significance in the Party's realization that higher education and production experience do not in themselves create a socialist quality in man, it is not clear what effect this will have on the Komsomol. It is important to note that these two areas -- education and production -- have always been the basis of the Komsomol's role in Soviet society. The past, and present, of the organization can be seen in terms of the alternating stress between these two functions. This was certainly evident in the post-Stalin period, in which the Komsomol's function see-sawed back and forth from education to production, although both were present at all times.

Despite the recurrence of familiar problems, the Komsomol must still be regarded as a vital and important organization. With a membership in 1970 of over 25 million, two-thirds of which are under 22 years of age, it has at least been very successful in recruiting the more impressionable youth. The low percentage of older members also indicates





that more youths are joining the Party once they become 23 or are dropping out. The Party's recent criticism that its members are reluctant to engage in Komsomol work suggests that youths who join the Party are quick to leave even important Komsomol positions.<sup>85</sup> Brezhnev had complained in 1966 that out of 2 1/2 million communists under 30, only 270,000 were working in the Komsomol.<sup>86</sup>

Perhaps the criticism of the Krasnoiarsk Party apparatus was related to this question, for the promotion of closer Party-Komsomol ties would necessitate more Party involvement in Komsomol affairs. Whatever the case, Party responsibility for the Komsomol's political indoctrination program may be seen as part of an overall effort to steer the Komsomol back into areas of economic concern.

In reviewing Komsomol policy and activity from 1953 to the present, two observations can be made. First, three more or less distinct periods emerge: 1953 to about 1958; 1958 to about 1965; and 1965 to the present. In the first period, the Komsomol and the regime were unable to formulate an overall policy with which to handle the

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<sup>85</sup>Only 31% of the secretaries of Komsomol primary organizations are Party members; loc. cit.

<sup>86</sup>Brezhnev's speech to the 23rd Party Congress, Pravda, March 30, 1966, pp. 2-9; trans. in CDSP, XVIII: 13 (April 20, 1966), p. 6.



rebelliousness of youth. In the second period, a series of coordinated campaigns were worked out designed to mobilize youth for economic purposes and to ostracize the nonconformists. In the third period, more attention was given to the internal revitalization of the Komsomol and to the Komsomol's role in the political education of youth.

Secondly, Komsomol activity in the post-Stalin period, except for the troublesome years following the death of the dictator, lapsed back into a series of alternating stresses. The economic mobilization after 1958 was replaced by emphasis on political education after 1965. There was no real shift in Komsomol policy and little change in tactics.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE KOMSOMOL'S ROLE IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST PARASITES AND HOOLIGANS, AN EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILIZATION

During the late 1950s, a vigorous, official campaign calling for the involvement of social organizations and the population in general, was launched against hooligans and parasites. Although various laws, having increasingly harsh penalties, had been adopted in the past, the absence of any concerted effort to eliminate these types of "deviants" before this time indicates that behavior of this sort was either relatively isolated or considered to be of little political or economic significance.<sup>1</sup>

With the death of Stalin, however, and the subsequent de-Stalinization campaign, incidents of parasitism and hooliganism began to receive more and more attention from the Party. This concern was but one reaction to a series of interacting problems which grew out of the unstable social and political climate following Stalin's death. Much

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<sup>1</sup>One possible exception was the concern over gangs of homeless children [besprizornyi], but this was treated as a temporary aberration resulting from special (wartime) conditions. For a detailed treatment of both Russian and Soviet anti-parasite laws, see R. Beerman, "Soviet and Russian Anti-Parasite Laws", Soviet Studies, XV: 4 (April, 1964), pp. 420-429.



to the dislike of the regime, ferment among youth was in part expressed in economic terms: youth were no longer impressed by the vision of a glorious future; instead, they wanted to cash in on some past promises. The post-war generation of youth had not passed through the hard "school of communism" -- industrialization, the Great Fatherland War, post-war construction: in short, hardship -- and were less inclined to accept self-denial and self-discipline as a way of life.

The Komsomol, throughout the period of the 1950s, remained committed to its past tradition of extolling the exigencies of production, hard labour, and the qualities associated with them. Being required to do so by the regime, and having played the part so long, the Komsomol was unable, if not unwilling, to change this approach. To youth, it was anachronistically harping on an old, sour tune. Although there were many youths who loyally obeyed the Komsomol's call to go to the Virgin Lands or the Far East, there were also many who not only desired to stay in the cities, but who also attempted to avoid the jobs assigned to them.<sup>2</sup> It may further be argued that youth went to the remote areas more out of a sense of personal challenge than out of a sense of duty to the Komsomol. It seemed that the Komsomol's function in smoothing over the conflict between the economic

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<sup>2</sup>See above, Chapter III.





necessities of the regime and the personal desires of youth was meeting with little success.

The situation can best be summarized by seeing the problem as the conflict between the production and leisure ethic.<sup>3</sup> The Komsomol had been, and still was, a strong exponent of the production ethic, that is, that hard work and production are positive values on behalf of which every able-bodied man must discipline himself and abstain from personal comfort in order to achieve eventual comfort for all. Opposed to this is the leisure ethic, which posits that production and work are necessary evils and that the pursuit of pleasure and consumer comforts is more worthwhile.

In contrast with the past, youth's desire for the good life in the here and now was no longer a remote possibility. The well-to-do class compounded this problem further by being only too willing to spoil their children.<sup>4</sup>

The relaxation policies of the regime were also a factor in the rise of parasitism and hooliganism. Perhaps in the attempt to dissociate themselves from the harsher elements of Stalinist rule, the leadership placed greater

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<sup>3</sup>Allen Kassof, The Soviet Youth Program: Regimentation and Rebellion (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 144.

<sup>4</sup>This was early condemned by the youth press. See "Under Papa's Wing", KP, December 21, 1953; quoted in Mark G. Field, "Drink and Delinquency in the USSR", PoC, IV: 3 (May-June, 1955), p. 31.



emphasis on the observance of "socialist legality". This occasioned, by 1958, the rewriting of the principles of criminal justice. In the process, various harsh penalties for petty theft, work-absenteeism, and petty hooliganism were sharply reduced. A 1956 decree, for example, reduced penalties for absence from work or resigning.<sup>5</sup> These reductions made it easier, and less dangerous, for people to engage in activities outside the realm of "socialist labor".

The Soviet leadership was thus faced with the problem of mobilizing much of the population for economic expansion and with securing at least outward support for the human qualities concomitant with productive efficiency. This of course was not a new goal, but it was one which required renewed emphasis in view of the inability to gain the active involvement, or even the support, of youth.

Since the problem concerned youth, the Komsomol was understandably called upon to intensify its traditional role in mobilizing youth for current tasks. Since it officially included within its ranks the type of youth who was to be emulated, its activity in this area was especially significant. Its success or failure would to some extent depend upon the appeal it generated to those who sought the leisure ethic outside its ranks. Having a virtual monopoly over

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<sup>5</sup>For a detailed analysis of the relaxation in penalties, see Y. Mironenko, "Soviet Legislation Against Private Property and Private Initiative", Bulletin, XI: 11 (November, 1964), 46-51.



many leisure and entertainment facilities, it had a powerful potential in providing an acceptable alternative which could eventually appeal to fun-loving youth. Its close relationship to, and hence association with, Party policies tended to pre-empt much of its potential appeal. In any contest with youth, it would be from the very beginning "on the other side". In addition, the social pressure which it traditionally applied fell more within the realm of battlefield tactics than peer group suasion.

One of the earliest expressions of official concern over youth's unruly behavior was Shelepin's speech to the 12th Komsomol Congress in 1954:

There are cases of unworthy behaviour in public places, on the streets or in the schools, of rudeness to teachers, parents, and adults, . . . of hooliganism. Many pupils are dissatisfied. . . . They seek an outlet for their initiative and energies in other and sometimes bad ways. . . . The activities [of clubs] suffer from monotony and lack of variety. . . . They are too regimented and too organized. . . . The work of many clubs does not satisfy young people.<sup>6</sup>

The Komsomol itself, however, was faced with many internal conflicts.<sup>7</sup> It had little opportunity (or possibility) of improving its work in auxiliary clubs. Much of its activity was spent in mobilizing youth for short range, high-priority economic campaigns, such as the Virgin Lands project.

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<sup>6</sup>As quoted in Field, op. cit., p. 30 [my italics].

<sup>7</sup>See above, Chapter III.



Throughout this period, increasing press coverage was given to the condemnation of the parasite and hooligan. Complaints were generally directed against obvious eyesores, such as the stilyag (the eastern version of the "zoot-suiter"), the "nihilist", or the petty speculator who sold underground records or rented his dacha. It was concern over this latter type of behavior (which cannot, of course, be fully separated from the former) which prompted the Party to act.

The Party's involvement in this area was largely attributable to the personal policies of Khrushchev. His personal approach was a significant factor in the content and method of the anti-parasite campaign. As First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, he had attacked the parasite and idler within the kolkhoz system:

Bolsheviks have no right to deal gently when the matter concerns the struggle against . . . idlers, parasitic elements, violators of public property -- all those who sit on the shoulders of honest kolkhozniks and prevent the kolkhoz from making rapid progress.<sup>8</sup>

Primarily concerned with the efficiency of agriculture (another favourite theme), Khrushchev recommended that general meetings of collective farmers be given the power to kick parasites off the farms. This theme was later expanded

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<sup>8</sup>As quoted in A. Boiter, "Comradely Justice: How Durable Is It?", PoC, XIV: 2 (March-April, 1965), p. 87.





to include the industrial sector:

Now about loafers. When I spoke about this at the [agricultural] conference in Gorky [April, 1957] I had in mind a draft law which proposes to grant the right to kolkhozniks, workers, employees, and the whole population to decide how slackers, idlers, people without a definite occupation or who live on some kind of unknown income should be dealt with. Workers have the right to check . . . and to cast them from their midst.<sup>9</sup>

When Khrushchev spoke these lines in 1958, laws dealing with some of these proposals -- in keeping with the Soviet method of testing new policies in remote or small republics -- had already been in force in Estonia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenia, and Latvia since early 1957. Vaguely defining the parasite as any "able-bodied citizen" over 18 living on unearned income, these laws granted the power of sentencing a parasite to a maximum of five years "exile" at forced labor to "general meetings" of the inhabitants of factories, houses, or dormitories in the area where the suspect worked or lived. The sentences could not be appealed upon confirmation by local Party authorities.<sup>10</sup> The "collective",

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<sup>9</sup>Loc. cit. [my italics].

<sup>10</sup>Marianne Armstrong, "The Campaign Against Parasites", in Peter H. Juviler and H. W. Morton, eds., Soviet Policy-Making: Studies of Communism in Transition (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 166. Draft laws were published in most republics. The author notes that administrative banishment with similar sentences was used against itinerant gypsies who refused to settle down in 1956.



which had traditionally dealt with matters of discipline and conduct, now wielded considerable powers through its "general meeting", which became, in effect, a court.<sup>11</sup> Although the meeting could also give warnings, or set a probational period, the significant sanction was exile at forced labor for a period of two to five years.

But who exactly was the parasite and hooligan and what was the nature of his crime? The definitions given by Soviet law, Soviet leaders, jurists, commentators, and the militia lacked any consistency. In general terms, the parasite was the sham worker, the "able-bodied citizen" who lived off unearned income (i.e., income derived from speculation, family, illegal sales, rents, and so forth) or the idler who refused to work, being supported by illegal activities or by his parents. Parasitism may be divided into three general categories. One group includes the idlers, loafers, and children of the rich. Another group comprises those who are "infected by the psychology of the private owners and grasper". These individuals work hard, but not for the state. They are the tolkachi and free-lancer who amass considerable personal wealth. The third group consists of the petty speculator, who sells goods on the black market or rents his dacha or car.

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<sup>11</sup>Or "non-court", as Leon Lipson calls it. "Hosts and Pests: The Fight Against Parasites", PoC, XIV: 2 (March-April, 1965), p. 73.



"Hooligan" was a catch-all term referring to anyone whose habits and behavior were clearly non-conformist or "unbecoming" of a citizen. The hooligan was the youth who mimicked Western culture, the hedonist, the epicurean, and the inveterate drunkard. Judging from press reports, two broad categories emerge. Within the first fall activities which would normally be classed as criminal: vandalism, rowdyism, and general violent acts. The other category consists of those people whose attitude sets them apart from the general behavior of Soviet people. These include the rich playboy who squanders his money on women and drink; the stilyag; the "nihilist"; or the person who scoffs at traditional procedures.<sup>12</sup>

It was difficult, however, to make any clear distinction between these two types. The stilyag, for instance, might also be a parasite, if he was not engaged in "socially-productive" work. The basic thrust of the anti-parasite campaign seems to have been aimed at frightening both social and economic "criminals". It would be unsafe for both parasites and hooligans.

Local action was a vital necessity in the implementation of this campaign. Perhaps this was one reason for giving the "collective" legal powers. Much emphasis was also placed upon the initiative of "public organizations",

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<sup>12</sup>See Allen Kassof, "Now the Angry Young Ivans", New York Times Magazine (November 19, 1961), pp. 22, 122-124.



such as factory and trade union committees, and Komsomol brigades. It was no doubt felt that the anti-parasite campaign would strengthen and mobilize the organizations for self-action [samodeiatel'nost'] and thereby achieve some local incentive.

By 1959, the Komsomol was given a leading role in the campaign, primarily against hooligans. Due to its administrative responsibility for various welfare agencies, it had long assumed the task of reforming the juvenile and adolescent delinquent. Groups of komsomol'tsy roamed the streets in search of the stilyag; Komsomol brigades raided factories in search of economic shortcomings; "Light Cavalry" detachments patrolled enterprises to see if everything was in order. This interference was bound to arouse some resentment. The Komsomol's "disciplinary" actions were sometimes met with considerable resistance. Herein lay a significant comment on the success of the campaign: given the general suspicion of all authority, how does one cope with the psychological association between the victim and the by-stander?

Cavalry raids, brigades, and detachments were generally informal affairs, however, organized and staffed by local Komsomol units. Except for the occasional "reforming" of a stilyag (which usually consisted of cutting his hair or tearing his clothes off -- and must have provided







some entertainment), disciplinary measures were largely restricted to action within the collective. Komsomol organizations complained that those who were not part of a collective were relatively free from social pressure:

They are not Komsomol members, so they cannot be summoned to a Komsomol meeting. They do not work anywhere, and so they cannot be subjected to the harsh justice of the workers' collective. . . .<sup>13</sup>

The solution was sought in bringing the collective to them. A system of People's Volunteers [druzhiny] was set up by a Decree of March 1959 to help the militia apprehend hooligans and parasites. They were to be established at "enterprises and construction projects, in transport, institutions, at state and collective farms, and in educational institutions and apartment house administrations." City or district headquarters consisting of representatives from Komsomol and other organizations were to provide direction. Membership was open to anyone over 18 and admittance was gained through application to trade union and Komsomol organizations at their place of work. They were called upon to go into the streets to "combat hooliganism" and to "participate in the explanatory work carried on by public organizations."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>I. Shatunovskii, "Pechal'nye rytsari zhevatel'noi rezinki", KP, January 17, 1959, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>The main elements of this joint decree of the Party



In theory, the druzhiny were to be recruited from "leading workers, employees, collective farmers, students, pupils and pensioners" who would "take the necessary measures to stop violations of the public order . . . primarily through persuasion and warning."<sup>15</sup> In practice, however, the detachments were often composed of "undesirable elements" who used their position to give beatings rather than warnings. Drunken guards were not loathe to beat up innocent people or anyone whose trousers were "less than four matchboxes" in width. Although the government press cautioned that "no one can judge the breadth of a person's world view by the width of his pants", excesses of this nature continued to occur.<sup>16</sup>

The Komsomol's role in the campaign against anti-social behavior was two-fold. On the one hand was its involvement with the People's Volunteers and the work of its own squads and brigades. On the other hand, Komsomol organizations were called upon to increase their work in political education. Taking its cue from Khrushchev's speech at the 21st Party Congress (1959), the Komsomol leadership pressed for more activity in political indoctrination

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Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers is summarized in Pravda and Izvestiia, March 10, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>16</sup>P. Koriagin, Izvestiia, October 12, 1960, p. 6.



as a means of developing the "new" Soviet man. Part of this effort was to be directed toward instilling a "conscious attitude toward labor" in youth.<sup>17</sup> Although emphasis was placed upon the mastering of Marxism-Leninism as well, it was felt that the basic shortcoming of propaganda was its detachment from life. The ideological campaign was to be directed toward "the struggle for strict realization of the principle, 'he who does not work, neither shall he eat'. . . ."<sup>18</sup> These pronouncements, however, were only paper directives and broad policy statements. The problem lay in their application. Local Komsomol organizations were unable to break through the apathy of their members. Meetings tended to simply reiterate yesterday's Pravda rather than venture into the unknown.

By early 1960, Komsomol central organs began to express concern over rank-and-file indifference.<sup>19</sup> The seventh Plenary session of the Komsomol Central Committee lamented cases "of mutual covering-up and indulgence of

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<sup>17</sup>"Moguchee sredstvo vospitaniia cheloveka budushchego", KP, September 4, 1959, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup>"O rabote komsomol'skikh organizatsii v sviazi s postanovleniem TsK KPSS 'O zadachakh partiinoi propagandy v sovremennykh usloviakh', Postanovlenie TsK VLKSM 19 fevralia 1960 goda", Spravochnik. . . ., op. cit., III: 718.

<sup>19</sup>See Karpinskii's report on public order to the VII Plenum of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, KP, February 4, 1960, p. 2, col. 1.



violations of public discipline" and chastized Komsomol members for not helping young people find socially useful work. Komsomol organizations were further criticized for not taking active participation in the People's Volunteers.<sup>20</sup>

In the ensuing attempt to involve the entire Komsomol membership in rehabilitative, preventive, and punitive measures, an increasingly important part was played by a massive publicity campaign. In an obvious ploy to generate public opinion, Komsomol'skaia pravda printed letters and articles dealing with the various types of hooligan and parasite. Letters to the editor upheld the suggestions made by the paper, and even called for more severe sanctions, such as depriving offenders of the use of educational and entertainment facilities.<sup>21</sup>

The type of hooligan or parasite described was usually the loafer, or the idler. No longer was he depicted as simply a ridiculous or disrespectful stilyag ". . . whom we shouldn't compare with apes for fear of giving needless offense to perfectly respectable animals."<sup>22</sup> The "new" loafer was described as a contemptible, defiant, immoral,

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<sup>20</sup>"O povyshenii roli komsomol'skikh organizatsii v bor'be s narusheniami obshchestvennogo poriadka", KP, February 5, 1960, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>Letters on this subject were especially numerous in September and October of 1960. A number of these are translated in CDSP, XII: 44 (November 30, 1960), pp. 10-12.

<sup>22</sup>I. Shatunovskii, "Pechal'nye rytsari. . .", op. cit., p. 4.







lazy playboy who seemed to combine the worst qualities of an Oblomov and a Don Juan. The paper complained that this type of person was outside the sanction of the Comrade's Courts because he had, "like all other local foreigners, . . . long since broken with the collective. He has no comrades and therefore cannot be brought before Comrade's Courts."<sup>23</sup> The power to sentence such people, concluded the paper, should be granted to the People's Volunteers.

Professional jurists and lawyers, however, were already of the opinion that too much power had been granted to the collective. They had opposed the anti-parasite laws and wanted to restrict the investigative actions and judicial functions of the general meeting. Many had pressed for the revival of the Comrade's Courts, in the hope that the latter would at least be more "judicial" in their treatment of parasites. Khrushchev, however, viewed the Comrade's Courts as the moral watchdog of the collective, not as an organ of the judicial system. Those who wished to see jurisdiction over parasites given to the Comrade's Courts were disappointed by the Draft Statute of October 1959, which gave these courts only perfunctory powers over parasites.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>I. Shatunovskii and A. Sukontsev, "Frenk Soldatkin -- mestnyi chuzhezemets", KP, August 11, 1960, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup>For a more thorough treatment of the opposition tactics, see M. Armstrong, "The Campaign Against Parasites", op. cit., pp. 167-180. Both Boiter, op. cit., p. 87, and Lipson, op. cit., p. 74, advance the theory that the pressure for the revival of Comrade's Courts stemmed from the desire of jurists to provide a more legal framework for the punishment of parasites and hooligans.



Top Komsomol officials nevertheless persisted in their demand for harsher social measures when they met with judicial and police officials in a Party-sponsored conference on the parasite problem held in 1960. General guidance was provided by the Party theoretical journal, Kommunist, which recommended stricter enforcement of existing laws and called for new, harsher legislation.<sup>25</sup> It seemed that the idea of rehabilitation through education and social pressure had been lost in the general rush to punish the malefactors. This approach could only restrict whatever flexibility the Komsomol might show.

The RSFSR Decree of May 4, 1961, finally resolved the question concerning the relative role of the various public organizations in the parasite campaign. This Decree, by giving powers of investigation and trial to the procurators and the regular (people's) courts respectively, placed parasitic behavior squarely within the realm of justiciable offenses. Public organizations, such as the Komsomol and the People's Volunteers, had to obtain the procurator's permission before a case could be heard before the "general meeting". The Comrade's Courts were generally to issue only "warnings", which were now a prerequisite to further action.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>"Kto ne rabotaet, tot ne est", Kommunist, No. 14 (September, 1960), pp. 13-21.

<sup>26</sup>Sovetskaia Rossiia, May 5, 1961, p. 3; trans. in CDSP, XIII: 17 (May 24, 1961), pp. 8-9.



In essence, then, this Decree, to which the other republic Decrees shortly conformed, deprived the various collective organizations of harsh punitive powers, but allowed for their active participation so as not to destroy the momentum which the earlier Decrees had initiated.

Volunteer organizations, moreover, were unlikely to apprehend the serious parasite, for the latter type was not readily detectable through the simple patrolling of the streets. Parasites, as defined by the 1961 Decree, were people who

frequently hold jobs for appearance's sake while in actual fact living on unearned income and enriching themselves at the expense of the state . . .; or, although able-bodied, they may hold no job at all but engage in forbidden enterprises, . . . speculation and begging, derive unearned income from the exploitation of personal automobiles, employ hired labour and obtain unearned income from dacha and land plots, build houses and dachas from funds obtained by non-labour means and using illegally acquired building materials, and commit other antisocial acts.<sup>27</sup>

Although some of these crimes were detectable through simple observation, part-time "vigilantes" who roamed the streets were more apt to encounter the "manifest" expressions of "antisocial behavior". As the activities and numbers of the druzhiny increased, confrontations with the "criminal" hooligan became more frequent. In some towns, the voluntary detachments were afraid to venture into the less well-lit

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 8.





streets. They were often looked upon with contempt and bystanders often came to the defense of the young hooligan.<sup>28</sup> Resistance became so violent that the death penalty was extended for offenses against the volunteer in the performance of his duty.<sup>29</sup>

Although the criminal hooligan was becoming a mounting problem, social action specifically directed against him was not as yet within the pale of the druzhiny. The latter would still of course have to deal with this element in the execution of their role in helping the militia. The essence of the campaign, however, was still directed toward mobilizing support against the non-conformist tendencies of young people, and especially against their insatiable desire to obtain information and material goods (blue jeans were a favourite) from Western tourists. Once again the Komsomol central newspaper launched a vociferous campaign intended to impress the readers with the dangers of idle and speculative behavior. I. Shatunovskii, who had been the major contributor to Komsomol'skaia pravda on the parasite theme, now shifted his approach from vindictive

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<sup>28</sup>See "The Upward Curve of Soviet Hooliganism", ACDSU, No. 4 (1961/62), 4 pp.

<sup>29</sup>Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, No. 8 (February 21, 1961), Article 83, p. 220.





persecution (although this was not neglected) to a more reasoned appeal, all the while pointing to the unpleasant consequences of carelessness. He argued that hooliganism was an infectious disease -- spread by hooliganococci<sup>30</sup> -- and warned that everyone must be constantly on his guard, especially against "friendly" foreigners. To illustrate his point, he cited the example of two idlers, Repnikov and Rybkin, whose curiosity resulted in their subversion by American tourists.<sup>31</sup> Copies of Time, Life, and Look were supposedly a major cause of their "treason".<sup>32</sup> The average hooligan had thus graduated from "brazen fool" and "contemptible playboy" to potential "traitor".

Shatunovskii's exhortations and warnings were indicative of the point of view prevalent within the Komsomol leadership and activists. Although the Komsomol was in no position to pursue an independent approach to the hooligan problem (it was forced to follow the Party's "line of attack"), its actions in this area could have been more

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<sup>30</sup>I. Shatunovskii, "Do vstrechi v sude", KP, July 16, 1961, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup>Vyacheslav Repnikov, 25, and Rostislav Rybkin, 26, were supposedly subverted by the American student, Richard Lane of Los Angeles, during the 1957 Moscow Youth Festival. He apparently had given instructions to spread "Western books, hold parties, drink vodka, and dance rock 'n roll." Youth and Freedom (New York, 1960, III: 3-4 [my italics]).

<sup>32</sup>Shatunovskii serialized this story in the August 30, 31, and September 1, 1960 editions of KP.



effective had it been at least somewhat inclined to listen to youth rather than merely talk at them. As demonstrated by the tactics of the druzhiny and the other "voluntary" policing organizations, the Komsomol's perceived role in the campaign was one of direction, not of interaction. It seemed both unwilling and unable to consider the complexity of the problem.

Except for blaming the influence of bourgeois propaganda and foreign tourists, no theory or explanation was put forward as to the causes of parasitism or hooliganism in general.<sup>33</sup> Neither would the Komsomol accept or even consider Aksenov's hypothesis, in his story Ticket to the Stars, that stilyagism was an inherent, and perhaps beneficial, part of growing up in any society and of any youth culture.<sup>34</sup> It was not until the campaign was a few years old that the Komsomol, faced with the realization that more and more youth were becoming "infected", began (at least in some quarters) to show some disillusionment and frustration with its failure:

Where the devil does this infamous breed of young

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<sup>33</sup>Some general "theories" (for example: parasitism indicates that social consciousness lags behind the development of society) were printed in the correspondence section of Kommunist. See "Kto ne rabotaet, tot ne est", No. 3 (February, 1961), pp. 109-115.

<sup>34</sup>His story was severely criticized in L. Stishova, "Fal'shivaia romantika", Molodoi kommunist, No. 10 (October, 1961), pp. 126-128.



people come from? Many of them are 20 to 25 years old. They are half as old as the October Revolution. They have grown up during the socialist period. In other words, their degenerate way of life has not been inherited -- but acquired -- which means that there are some aspects of modern existence that either promote or fail to oppose the development of the parasite.<sup>35</sup>

One reality of Soviet existence which was felt to promote parasitism and hooliganism was the high consumption of alcohol. For both political and economic reasons -- drunkenness was not in keeping with the qualities of the new Soviet man and it added to work absenteeism -- the regime had long been opposed to the easy access to hard liquor. The increasing press coverage which this subject received indicated that there would be a stepped-up campaign against the sale of alcohol. The Komsomol press joined the fight by condemning the availability of liquor in vending machines and public places.<sup>36</sup> Even the Komsomol-sponsored youth cafes, however, were forced to sell alcohol to remain in business.<sup>37</sup>

There was little doubt that alcoholism was a major source of hooligan activity. A survey in 1960 showed that

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<sup>35</sup>K. Volkov, "Vyvat' korni tuneiadstva !", KP, July 17, 1963, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup>T. Kozhevnikova, B. Kolesnikov, and A. Pavlov, "Statistika ravnodushii i avtomatika zla", KP, September 10, 1961, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup>See William M. Jackson, "Young Soviets and an Aging Komsomol", in Denis Dirscherl, The New Russia (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum Press, 1968), p. 65.





96% of those sentenced for hooliganism were drunk.<sup>38</sup> The regime, too, was certainly aware of this connection: the 1961 RSFSR Decree admitted that "the parasitic existence . . . is as a rule accompanied by drunkenness", which, it felt, had "an adverse effect on the other unstable members of society."

The problem, again, lay in what could be done. It did not seem feasible or possible to prohibit alcohol altogether, for this might arouse too much resentment. In addition, alcohol, as in the case of youth cafes, was a necessary element in meeting the plan. The alcoholic could be taken to "sobering-up stations", but the "special comforts" there -- puffed-up pillows, showers, snow-white linen (indeed luxuries for the Soviet citizen) -- were hardly a deterrent.<sup>39</sup>

The newspapers continued their sharp condemnation

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<sup>38</sup>A general analysis on the sources of criminal behavior can be found in A. A. Gertsenzon, "Ob izuchenii i pre-duprezhdenii prestupnosti", Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo, No. 7 (July, 1960), pp. 78-88. Gertsenzon based his statistics on a survey by the Scientific Research Institute of Criminal Law. According to the latter, 96% of those convicted of hooliganism were drunk; corresponding figures for rape were 67%; for murder, 81%; for bodily harm, 57%. Similar figures were given in 1965: see Sotsialisticheskaia zakonnost', No. 12 (December, 1965), p. 38.

<sup>39</sup>V. Ponizovskii, Izvestiia, March 29, 1961, p. 6; trans. as "Subsidized Drunkards" in CDSP, XIII: 13 (April 26, 1961), p. 27.





of drinking and its evil effects (even to the point of calling the home drunkard a "domestic hooligan"), but to no avail. Harsher penalties were prescribed in 1966 in a new Decree on petty hooliganism which imposed a fine of 3 to 10 rubles for "appearance on the streets or in other public places in an intoxicated state that is offensive to human dignity and public morality."<sup>40</sup> The same Decree made parents financially punishable for the drinking habits of their children. By 1967, inveterate drunkards were to be forcibly treated and subjected to corrective labor for periods of one to two years. They were still to retain their housing seniority, previous employment, and pension upon their return.<sup>41</sup> Soviet sources claim that 77% of those released from these "therapeutic-labor prophylactoria" are cured.<sup>42</sup>

No doubt these measures have had some influence on reducing the incidents of hooliganism due to intoxication, although probably not to the extent claimed. Corrective treatment seems to be reserved only for the chronic alcoholic. Isolated, though significant, reports continue to

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<sup>40</sup>Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, No. 30 (July 27, 1966), Article 1324, pp. 582-586.

<sup>41</sup>Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR, No. 15 (April 8, 1967), Article 333, pp. 329-330.

<sup>42</sup>V. Samsonov, Departmental Chief of USSR Procuracy, and N. Beliakin, Departmental Procurator, "Lechebno-trudovye profilaktorii v bor'be s alkogalizmom", Sotsialisticheskaya zakonnost', No. 4 (April, 1968), p. 28.



speak of the need to apprehend all drunkards or to conduct a stricter campaign against home distilling.<sup>43</sup> The problem will most likely not be resolved in the near future, and will probably increase with the introduction of the five-day week. Alcoholism in the Soviet Union is less a vice than a reaction to the lack of leisure time activities. Until more pleasurable methods of escapism from the dreariness of Soviet life are made available, the bottle of vodka will continue to have its appeal.

By the mid 1960s, the campaign against hooligans and parasites was spreading out its tentacles with increasing frequency. Attention, however, was soon directed toward the rise of juvenile delinquency, that is, the problem was slowly being recognized as social, rather than economic. Perhaps this was linked to the better performance of the economy in general (or, the realization that economic expansion required material incentives). But it was also apparent that it was the juvenile who was committing an ever-growing number of serious crimes.

The Juvenile Affairs Commission, which had been

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<sup>43</sup>Sotsialisticheskaia zakonnost', No. 11 (1969), p. 40, complained that militia officials in Voronezh oblast have stopped registering drunks. A recent law in the Ukraine calls for more coordination or measures against illicit distilling in Chernigov oblast. See Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta Ukr. SSR, No. 32 (1968), pp. 392-394.



established in the summer of 1961,<sup>44</sup> offered no real solution, for they were in effect courts which dealt with the juvenile after he had committed the crime.<sup>45</sup> The Komsomol's role in working with juveniles was, and had traditionally been, ineffectual. One need only examine the Komsomol's record in guiding the Pioneers to realize how poor the Komsomol work in this area had been.

The activity of Komsomol detachments and the People's Volunteers was also ineffective in combatting the "young hooligan". In some cities, even workers' homes had to be guarded against "a raid by young hooligans". Gangs of youngsters would sometimes take over entire buildings and clubs, setting fire to newspapers in the mailboxes, carving "inscriptions" in the walls, and breaking windows and lights. One week's destruction in Uralsk ". . . consisted of the refreshment stand, the shooting gallery, the pavilion, ten charred trees, broken urns, torn fences . . . , trampled and burnt grass."<sup>46</sup> Moscow was forced to set a curfew at 10 p.m. in the beginning of 1966, perhaps to prevent any more "rumbles" from taking place between graduating classes.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR, No. 35 (1961), Article 483, pp. 517-523.

<sup>45</sup>See Y. P. Mironenko, "New Legislation Against Juvenile Delinquency", Bulletin, IX: 6 (June, 1962), pp. 45-51.

<sup>46</sup>"Juvenile Delinquency in the Soviet Union", ACDSU, No. 3 (1964/65).

<sup>47</sup>William Jackson reports that a "rumble" took place in Red Square in June, 1965, op. cit., p. 59.



Police, State, and Komsomol officials were at a loss to explain the problem. Some suggested that the rise of juvenile delinquency was attributable to the penetration of bourgeois ideology; others asserted that more juvenile delinquents had been apprehended because police action was now more efficient; still others pointed to the lack of juvenile jobs or the difficulties of "adjustment" to a job.<sup>48</sup>

Whatever the reasons for the increase in juvenile delinquency, the significance of this development lay in the fact that the younger generation was neither impressed nor influenced by the social pressure applied by the Komsomol. Their actions could not be explained by the lack of recreational facilities, for the latter were often an object of their destruction or scorn.<sup>49</sup> The only explanation seems to lie in the suggestion that youth was in the process of developing its own youth culture (or anti-culture). It could no longer be forced to blindly accept the values represented by the Komsomol.

The response to this situation followed the

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<sup>48</sup>A special session of the Bureau of the Komsomol Central Committee was held on this topic in July of 1964. *Pravda*, July 26, 1964, p. 4; trans. in CDSP, XVI: 31 (August 26, 1964), pp. 33-34.

<sup>49</sup>*Iunost'*, No. 5 (1964), p. 77, described the destructive actions of youth at a sporting holiday at the Kliazma water reservoir.







well-trodden paths. After condemning the shortcomings of the Komsomol in its work among youth, the Party called for more intensive educational work, and especially the inculcation of patriotism. By 1966, the Komsomol was left with only a perfunctory role in the anti-parasite campaign, perhaps in the effort to dissociate it from involvement with the harsh legal penalties. It was now called upon to improve recreational and leisure facilities. The shift in its role from "enforcement" to ideological and educational work among schoolchildren was further reflected in 1967, when it was given more responsibility in directing the Pioneer Organization.<sup>50</sup>

In the years that followed, the Komsomol and its press did not refrain from castigating the hooligan, the parasite, or the non-conformist youth in general. But these actions had now become secondary to "cleaning up its own house".

In terms of social and economic mobilization of the general population, the campaign against parasites and hooligans was an initial success. Although some of this success can be attributed to the mobilizing effort of the Komsomol, much of it was the result of the initiative and power given to the "general meeting" of the collective. The revival

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<sup>50</sup>See below, Chapter III.



of the Comrade's Courts and the establishment of the People's Volunteers did secure a modicum of local participation in the drive against the violation of the production ethic. Despite the abuses generated by the opportunity for personal revenge offered by membership in the voluntary policing organizations, membership did mean commitment. The Komsomol, too, was momentarily injected with a new life-blood: it now at least had some reason to hold meetings, roam the streets, and check on others. This early enthusiasm, however, no doubt made the subsequent disillusionment more frustrating.

The Party, it seemed, had scored a three-fold success: it managed to commit a significant part of the population in the campaign against crimes which were difficult to detect without such commitment; it taught a valuable social lesson in demonstrating the limits of socialist labor and employed peer-group pressure to do so; and it managed to utilize and control the leisure time of the groups involved on behalf of official policies.

With time, however, indifference and reaction countered these early successes. The legal experiment was the first to fail. By 1961, the initiative in the campaign had shifted from the collective to the judicial system. In many ways, this was a step in the right direction, if indeed there had to be parasite laws, for the suspect would at least be protected from the arbitrary actions of his own



colleagues. This shift, although it indicated that the professionals within the judicial system were capable of applying considerable pressure (and gaining compromises), implicitly admitted the failure of the collective as a potential "communist unit" through which the future society would be guided.

The Komsomol failed to improve its image. Despite its potential to provide an avenue for conciliation between the hooligan and the state -- and thus an alternative to useless rowdyism -- its bureaucratic rigidity and formalistic approach made it incapable and even unwilling to do so. Nor was its role ever seen in terms of providing an alternative. Its role was seen as a mobilizing organization for Party directives, not as a conciliation agency within which youth problems could be thrashed out and smoothed over. Its strategy in approaching the youth problem was that of the battlefield. Only when the Party realized that existing methods were ineffective, especially when dealing with the juvenile, was the Komsomol allowed, and even then it was commanded, to give more attention to the social problems of youth (parasitism was, after all, essentially an economic problem). The Komsomol may indeed be a very successful agency for mobilizing youth for officially-sponsored campaigns, but so long as it plays second fiddle to the Party's interpretation of the youth problem, it will be unable to detect, much less act upon, the actual problems



facing the younger generation. It will have to be given more independence before it will be able to adapt and therefore appeal to the more sophisticated youth. Involvement in official campaigns may mobilize its membership and thus achieve a facade of activity, but it is hardly an effective means of changing its image.





## CHAPTER V

### KOMSOMOL COMMUNICATIONS

One of the main elements in the post-Stalin concern over the improvement of political socialization methods has been the stimulation, molding, and control of public opinion. This has generally been a function of the complex network of propaganda and agitation agencies and of mass communications, the most important of which is the press. In particular, the Komsomol press, and especially Komsomol'skaia pravda, has always been given the task of shaping young people's opinions. This Chapter places the Komsomol press within the general context of the Soviet press and then examines the role of Komsomol'skaia pravda in mobilizing public opinion and in the development of youth surveys.

#### The Komsomol Press

The role of the press in Soviet society has always been dictated by the Communist Party. The press is not a business venture, nor is it solely an information media. It has always been considered a powerful means of mobilization, whether it be for economic tasks or agitation. Lenin spoke of it as a "collective propagandist, agitator, and



organizer"; Stalin called it a driving belt; Khrushchev felt it was an ideological weapon.<sup>1</sup> Whatever priority the press has received at any particular moment, the most salient feature of its existence was the fact that any newspapers and periodicals could, and still can, be abolished and created, amalgamated or divided, by the Party at will.

In general, the organization of the Soviet press is based upon two principles, the first of which is specialization. The Party, at its Twelfth Congress in 1923, felt it necessary "to create a particular type of newspaper for each basic stratum of reader."<sup>2</sup> Pravda and Izvestiia, for example, are meant for a national audience; Komsomol'skaia pravda, for youth; Voprosy filosofii, e.g., a journal for academicians.

The second principle of the organization of the Soviet press lies in the existence of newspapers at every governmental and administrative level. Republic, Krai, and oblast' newspapers are designed to provide local news and are usually printed in two editions, one in Russian and one in the language of the area. There is also a "lower" press in various institutions, especially factories and universities,

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<sup>1</sup>Alex Inkeles, "Soviet Mass Communications", in his Social Change in Soviet Russia (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 276. For a general treatment of the Soviet press, see A. Buzek, How the Communist Press Works (New York: Praeger, 1964), 287 pp.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Robert Conquest, ed., The Politics of Ideas in the Soviet Union (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 68.



as well as numerous "wall" newspapers and "action" sheets. The latter two serve, for example, to shame local slackers or exhort the community to become involved in a particular issue.

The Komsomol press adheres to similar principles. There are Komsomol newspapers and periodicals at the union, republican, krai, and oblast' levels, as well as in the universities, plants, and collective farms. In 1966, the Komsomol printed 127 newspapers in 24 languages and 22 periodicals.<sup>3</sup> By 1968, the Komsomol boasted publication of 219 newspapers.<sup>4</sup> There are also three publishing houses attached to the Komsomol Central Committee, the most important of which is Molodaia Gvardiia, which publishes thousands of books for youth in thousands of copies every year.<sup>5</sup>

By far the most important Komsomol newspaper is Komsomol'skaia pravda. Founded in 1925, it was seen not as an "organ for discussion, but an organ which is, first and foremost, positive, which gives the readers slogans and

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<sup>3</sup>Ezhegodnik, BSE (2nd ed.; 1966), p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>E. M. Tiazhel'nikov, "Delu Lenina i partii verny !", Pravda, October 26, 1968, p. 4, column 2.

<sup>5</sup>The other publishing houses are Molod' and Esh Gvardiia. The Komsomol press also publishes or controls 26 Pioneer papers, and 37 Pioneer and children's journals. Ezhegodnik, BSE (2nd ed.; 1966), p. 39.



viewpoints accepted by the Party."<sup>6</sup> Thus, from its very inception, the central Komsomol newspaper was not a medium in which the problems of youth were to be discussed, but a medium through which Party propaganda was to be instilled in youth.

Early circulation was sporadic. Mayakovskii was called upon by the Party agitprop department to agitate for a circulation of 100,000 in 1927. Subscription slowly climbed to about two million in the late 1950s, when it began to increase rapidly. By 1968, the paper had a daily circulation of over seven million.<sup>7</sup>

The functions of the paper are both many and varied. In general, it serves as a communications link between the Party and youth. This position makes it the purveyor of an official youth culture, and it comments on everything from dance steps and driving tractors to the purpose of life in a communist society. It constantly reminds youth of the qualities expected of them and urges the Komsomol and other organizations to foster these. This is especially true of major official programs, such as the promotion of the Moral Code of the Builders of Communism.

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<sup>6</sup>This was Stalin's comment; as quoted in S. I. Ploss, "From Youthful Zeal to Middle Age", PoC, VII: 5 (September-October, 1958), p. 12.

<sup>7</sup>The preceeding paragraph is based on an article by L. Karpinskii on the 40th anniversary of KP, "Gazeta Sovetskoi molodezhi", Pravda, May 24, 1965, p. 2; trans. in CDSP, XVIII: 21 (June 16, 1965), pp. 26-27.







Its most common and successful method of fostering a youth "culture" is the stimulation of debate and discussion through the letters-to-the-editor column. The number of letters received has climbed from 26,831 in 1945 to over 300,000 in 1964.<sup>8</sup> This column is one of the liveliest sections of the paper, for it deals with a variety of critical letters and unusual opinions.

In general terms, the editors use these letters as edifying anecdotes which demonstrate "improper" opinions. As such, this establishes the boundaries of permissive behaviour. "Unusual" letters are often singled out by the editors, who then ask for comment. This method not only stimulates "public" concern over a particularly "unpleasant" attitude, but it also allows for the utilization of the "correct" opinions of other letters (which are always in the majority). After this correct attitude has been illustrated, the reader is left with the impression of a massive social consensus against the improper attitude.

In addition, letters also serve as a safety valve for petty complaints. The paper even investigates some of the criticisms and quite often succeeds in gaining some recompense or "unmasking" some arbitrary Komsomol decisions (mostly at the local level). Although the Party generally

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<sup>8</sup>Loc. cit.



applauds this type of activity, it is not always too pleased by the nature of the publicity which brings it about. The Party has often admonished the paper for its periodic lack of concentration on the positive elements of Soviet life. Yet it is perhaps for this very reason that the paper continues to remain lively.

Komsomol'skaia pravda, then, is much more than a news or propaganda media: it is also an agency for mobilization. Its two most salient features in this regard are (1) its involvement in the formation and stimulation of public opinion; and (2) its role in spreading desirable attitudes.

#### Komsomol'skaia Pravda's Institute of Public Opinion

The official establishment of the Institute of Public Opinion by Komsomol'skaia pravda on May 19, 1960, was in many ways a sudden and surprising move, for there had been little discussion or previous publication of the event. Nor had any such institution existed prior to this announcement. The rapidity of its development was further demonstrated by the fact that the results of the first poll were reported in the same issue of the paper.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>"Institut obshchestvennogo mneniia 'Komsomolskoi pravdy'", KP, May 19, 1960, p. 1; trans. in CDSP, XII: 20 (June 15, 1960), p. 24. The paper reported that the first



Although there were no official reasons given for the founding of the Institute, its very existence at least indicated that the regime was no longer indisposed to experiment with new methods of gauging the opinions of youth.<sup>10</sup> As the early polls revealed, however, the areas of investigation were restricted to largely nonpolitical questions or the measuring of attitudes on "safe" topics such as opinions on the inevitability of war. The important question, nevertheless, lay in the use of the polls' results: was the knowledge gained to be used as a point of departure for social change or was it to be manipulated for purposes of social control? In other words, would the Party use the results for concrete changes suggested by the samples or would it merely genuflect at the altar of scientism and use the polls as a convenient source of information for the formation of more effective status quo policies? This was

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polls had been conducted between May 10 and May 14. The results, in the form of letters, were analysed by B. Grushin, Head of the Institute, and V. Chikin, "Udastsia li chelovechestvu predotvratit' voinu? Da ! otvechaet tridtsatyi meridan", pp. 3-4 of the same issue; trans. in CDSP, XII: 20 (June 15, 1960), pp. 24-31.

<sup>10</sup>The paper did imply, however, that it received its inspiration for this move from the party: "To expand ties with the reader and to offer a newspaper platform to the greatest number of builders of communism are tasks set before the press. . . . The Party Central Committee resolution 'On the Tasks of Party Propaganda in Present-Day Conditions' declares that 'newspapers and magazines must . . . vigorously help the party to accomplish the concrete tasks of communist construction and of educating the working people!' Translated in "Komsomol'skaia pravda's Public Opinion Institute", CDSP, XII: 20 (June 15, 1960), p. 24.





apparently not a problem for the editors of the paper, for they explicitly stated that public opinion surveys "would make it possible to take into consideration the most diverse opinions; this is important in the practice of propaganda work."<sup>11</sup>

The two polls conducted during 1960 fell more within the realm of agitprop techniques than that of social surveys (partly due to lack of sophistication). They sought to scientifically demonstrate the prevalence of officially-desired attitudes by pointing to an overwhelming social consensus on the "correct" side of the topics investigated.

The first poll found that the great majority of respondents, when asked about the inevitability of war, felt that a war could be averted. This finding may now seem trivial but it was then very important in propaganda opportunities and was not without political significance. Analysts of the poll did not hesitate to contrast "peace-loving" Soviet youth with aggressive elements in other countries or to claim that the population whole-heartedly affirmed the policy of peaceful coexistence.

The second poll, conducted during the summer of 1960, dealt with opinions on Soviet living standards. Although "more than 50% of the respondents (739 out of 1,399) wanted better housing, more than 73% felt that their standard of

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<sup>11</sup>Loc. cit.





living had risen. The inconclusive nature of the results was nevertheless used in the claim that people linked the rise in the living standards to "the policy of the Communist Party" and that it was an indication of their support of the Party's Central Committee.<sup>12</sup>

By Western standards, the methodology of both polls was hardly scientific. One Western commentator suggested that the limitations of the method probably resulted "more from ignorance . . . than intentional rigging."<sup>13</sup> The findings, however, suffered both from ignorance of method and from a desire to control the results. Questionnaires for the first poll, for instance, were handed out by Party and Komsomol officials (presumably to persons chosen by them), a fact which no doubt impressed upon the respondents the official significance of the poll and was probably a great influence on their answers. This poll suffered from crude sampling techniques in another way: answers were restricted to one thousand (apparently one hundred from each of ten points along the 30th meridian).

The second poll, although it reflected some awareness

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<sup>12</sup>For a copy of the questionnaire, see "How Has Your Living Standard Changed?", KP, October 7, 1960, pp. 1, 2. An analysis of the results was given by B. Grushin and V. Chikin, "What the Questionnaires Showed", pp. 2-4 of the same issue; trans. in CDSP, XII: 41 (November 9, 1960), pp. 9-13 and 13-18 respectively.

<sup>13</sup>Allen Kassof, "Moscow Discovers Public Opinion Polls", PoC, X: 3 (May-June, 1961), p. 52.



of scientific procedure, was also not free from manipulation. Questionnaires were distributed by conductors in one coach "in each of 65 trains leaving Moscow in one day." Although a good cross-section of both ethnic and occupational groups were polled, there was little consideration given to randomness, i.e., the possibility that the standard of living of those taking trains out of Moscow might not be representative of the country as a whole.

These two initial polls, however, despite their crude methodology and the blatant use of their results for propaganda, were nevertheless significant indicators of a new approach by the regime. The mere fact that the "measuring" of public opinion was considered a valid pursuit implied that the Soviet leadership was at least aware of the opportunities to be derived from gauging public attitudes, whether it be for the manipulation of a carefully-cultivated social consensus or for the implementation of any social change. Even if these early polls found their sole rationale in the creation or manipulation of public opinion rather than its measurement, they would nevertheless not lose their significance as examples of the extent of the regime's realization that the fostering, or even the awareness, of public opinion was an important device in mass mobilization. The fact that the youth newspaper was responsible for the Institute was also not without significance: it was



probably hoped that young people would become involved, thereby gaining some level of moral mobilization.

The third poll, conducted in 1961, concerned itself exclusively with the opinions of youth (up to the age of 30). It also departed from past traditions in that the questionnaire was printed in the newspaper. Answers could be given in letter form, provided each section was answered. The questionnaire consisted of twelve sections:

- (1) What do you think of your generation? Does it please you and are you satisfied with its goals? (Yes or no).
- (2) On what do you base your opinion?
- (3) In your opinion, what traits are strongest in Soviet young people? Where are they most clearly in evidence?
- (4) In your opinion, are there any negative characteristics common among young people? If yes, what are they?
- (5) What justification do you have for your opinion?
- (6) Which of the following is, in your opinion, more typical of young people (underline one): purposefulness, a lack of goals?
- (7) Do you have a personal goal in life? (Yes, no, have not thought about it).
- (8) What is it?
- (9) What must you do to achieve it?
- (10) What have you already done?
- (11) Do you think you will achieve your goal? (Yes, no don't know).
- (12) On what do you base your certainty?

Respondents were also asked to give their age, level of education, occupation, length of time they had been earning a living, address, and sex.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>"Chto vy dumaete o svoem pokolenii?", KP, January 6,





The response was so great that the editors of the paper decided to accept letters only until January 26 (20 days after the initial questionnaire had appeared). Answers began to appear in the paper as early as January 11, and continued through February, March, April, and July. In all, over 21,000 answers were received, which were cut to 17,446 for various reasons.<sup>15</sup>

Although the replies were generally positive, there were a few negative results, as some letters revealed a disdainful attitude toward manual labor and an easy-going attitude toward life. These were expressed in statements concerning young people's goals in life, which ranged from a desire to fly to the moon to a pretty young wife -- "preferably a blonde". There were 342 letters which defined

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1961, p. 1. The first letter-returns were printed in KP, January 11, 1960, p. 3; trans. in CDSP, XIII: 2 (February 8, 1961), pp. 32-34.

<sup>15</sup>Over 1,000 questionnaires were rejected due to the age of the respondent (over 30), 500 lacked answers to major questions, and several dozen were in verse form. V. V. Chikin and B. Grushin, "Confessions of a Generation", KP, July 21, 1961, pp. 1-4; trans. in CDSP, XIII: 34 (September 20, 1961), pp. 3-8.

Letters appeared in the paper on (1) January 11, 1961, p. 3; trans. in CDSP, XIII: 2 (February 8, 1961), pp. 32-34; (2) January 26, pp. 2-3, and February 24, p. 3; trans. in CDSP, XIII: 15 (May 10, 1961), pp. 15-25; (3) March 16, p. 1; trans. in CDSP, XIII: 15 (May 10, 1961), p. 21; (4) April 28, pp. 2-3; trans. in CDSP, XIII: 24 (July 12, 1961), pp. 17-18. For a translation of the analytic articles by Chikin and Grushin, which appeared in the July 21 and 22 editions of the paper, see The Soviet Review, II: 11 and 12 (November and December, 1961), pp. 3-24 and 47-65 respectively. A general treatment of this topic is given in G. F. Akhminov, "The Aspirations and Hopes of Soviet Youth", Bulletin, X: 1 (January, 1963), pp. 3-17.





personal goals in terms of material comfort and an easy life. They were used as token examples of negative traits which should be avoided.

As for the positive results, the poll provided extensive material for propaganda usage in addition to the general claims that Soviet youth were progressive, loyal and industrious.

First, Komsomol'skaia pravda took full advantage of the enthusiastic response by printing the letters over a six month period; in short, it sought to prolong the discussion on the favourable aspects of youth's own "confession". Secondly, the paper attempted to involve the older generation in this discussion by asking for their reactions. The latter loyally submitted sophisticated, essay-type answers which alternately praised youth and scored the Komsomol for its formalism. The debate -- in the form of letters -- was slowly evolving into two categories: (1) the general positive qualities of youth; and (2) the role of the Komsomol in combatting the negative tendencies.<sup>16</sup>

Thirdly, a book, Confession of a Generation, appeared in 1952. Written by the paper's analysts of the poll, it added little to what had already been said, further

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<sup>16</sup>The request went out to the older generation in March, 1961. See the reference to KP, March 16, in footnote fifteen.



glorifying the positive traits of the younger generation.<sup>17</sup>

Fourthly, the poll was praised by academicians for both its scientific and its propaganda value. One article in Voprosy filosofii,<sup>18</sup> the organ of the USSR Academy of Science's Philosophy Institute -- which provided the computers for the analysis of the poll -- commented that "the specific nature of such studies lies . . . in that the data obtained make it possible at any given moment to establish the extent and depth of the influence of various social phenomena on the conceptions, evaluations, and judgements of large groups of persons." The same article made two further points concerning the use of public opinion polls in social control: (1) the conducting of the poll "in itself constitutes a means of activating public opinion, of focusing its attention on important social problems; and (2) the opinion poll was an "effective means of mass moral control over the observation of ethical norms and the rules of socialist society. . . ."

There were two further results of the poll, however, which were of concrete significance. In analyzing the answers to question three, which asked for opinions on the strong traits of Soviet youth, ten such traits were found

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<sup>17</sup>B. Grushin, V. Chikin, Ispoved' pokoleniia (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962), 247 pp.

<sup>18</sup>M. K. Igitkhanian, "Dukovnyi oblik Sovetskoi molodezhi", Voprosy filosofii, No. 6 (June, 1963), pp. 75-84; trans in CDSP, XV: 39 (October 23, 1963), pp. 16-18.



to be widespread, ranging from patriotism (5,592 of 17,446), devotion to communism (3,865), industriousness (3,460) to collectivism (2,598) and the striving for the new (1,089). These traits were surprisingly similar to the officially-promoted qualities outlined in the code of the Communist Labor Brigade movement of 1958 and 1959.<sup>19</sup> These same traits also found prominence in the Moral Code of the Builders of Communism, which appeared in the Communist Party Program later that year and in the new Komsomol Statutes in 1962. Although there was no official recognition of any direct connection between the traits expressed in the poll and the principles of the later moral code, the coincidence was noted as an example of the Party's link with "real life":

We see that the features of the spiritual image and traits of behavior of young people indicated in the answers coincide with the principles of the moral code of the builders of communism as formulated by the Party Program, although the poll was conducted in January, 1961, when the Party Program had not yet been issued.<sup>20</sup>

A second important development directly linked to the results of the poll was the significance attached to the life-plans or goals of Soviet youth. Most respondents

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<sup>19</sup>See Chapter III.

<sup>20</sup>M. Kh. Igitkhanian, op. cit., p. 77.



had a definite personal goal in life and were working toward it. This theme served as propaganda, for it demonstrated that Soviet youth had a purpose in life, but it also became the basis of future youth surveys, which will be dealt with later in this Chapter.

In many ways, then, this poll was an important landmark in the study of public opinion in the Soviet Union. Although its methodology suffered from the limitations of the size and representativeness of the sample, it did allow for the measurement of some dissenting opinion. The fact that its results were used for propaganda was never denied by the authorities. Indeed, the Soviet approach to public opinion surveys stressed this very use. Yet the significance of the poll lay in the realization that this type of research could serve for more than a propaganda purpose: it could be used as a "guide" for further research in some promising areas (such as life-plan studies) and as a basis for the introduction of new programs (such as the moral code). It seemed that the groundwork for the practical and propaganda validity of public opinion polls had been laid.

The Institute of Public Opinion continued to conduct surveys using the newspaper-questionnaire method, but none achieved the importance of the above poll. The topics were diverse, ranging from opinions on the young family to recommendations on which articles should be included in a







spaceship bound for Mars.<sup>21</sup> These polls, however, served no practical purpose other than use in propaganda or as a means to involve youth in a national discussion. Even the methodology suffered; there were many "collective" answers submitted -- which in itself indicates that the polls were considered an opportunity to commit and mobilize youth for the topics involved. As such, they merely documented the prevalence of officially-desired attitudes, which, in these cases, concerned the communist upbringing of young children and the glorification of Soviet achievements and heroes.<sup>22</sup>

By the mid-1960s, however, Komsomol involvement in public opinion polls was growing increasingly rare. Attention was now focused on studies of particular problems, such as leisure time. This area of investigation was seen as a valid concern for sociological surveys, for the "misuse" of leisure time was felt to be a factor in the rising rate of hooliganism and parasitism.<sup>23</sup> Komsomol'skaia pravda had

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<sup>21</sup>"What Do You Think of the Young Family?", KP, December 17, 1961, p. 4; trans. in CDSP, XIV: 9 (March 28, 1962), pp. 17-19. "To Mars -- With What?", KP, October 20, 1963, pp. 1-3; trans. in CDSP, XV: 45 (December 4, 1963), pp. 7-12.

<sup>22</sup>In terms of political socialization, it is important to note that in the poll, "To Mars -- With What?", Soviet youth listed the October Revolution as the most significant event, the Party Program as the most important document, and Lenin as the greatest man (98.2%), Loc. cit.

<sup>23</sup>The Institute's first survey on free time was conducted in 1963. "How Do You Spend Your Free Time?", KP,



taken a newspaper survey of free time in 1963, but it now discarded the paper-questionnaire method (although surveys were still conducted under the auspices of the Institute of Public Opinion): two surveys on leisure time were conducted in 40 cities "by a specially-devised system" (unexplained), with one in Smolensk based upon personal interviews.<sup>24</sup>

The shift away from public opinion surveys was probably one result of the move toward more scientific social research and the rise of sociology as a separate discipline. The party, in early 1965, began to stress the use of social

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January 11, 1963; p. 4; trans. in CDSP, XV: 7 (March 13, 1963), pp. 12-14. This poll lamented the undesirable consequences of boredom, lack of initiative, and lack of sporting facilities. It generally confirmed the regime's contention that idleness and drunkenness were closely linked. One representative letter complained that "there is nowhere to spend our free time. We assemble at friends' homes, play cards. When we feel depressed, we drink vodka." T. Gromova, "I Am Still Waiting", KP, March 27, 1963, p. 2; trans. in CDSP, XV: 15 (May 8, 1963), p. 22.

<sup>24</sup>The use of a "specially-devised system" was reported in "Kak vy provodite svobodnoe vremia?", KP, December 27, 1963, p. 2. The poll in Smolensk was conducted in 1965. Fifty students from each of the twenty secondary schools were interviewed. One of the most significant findings was the low percentage of involvement in "public assignments": only 13% spent their free time in this way. There was also a definite lack of interest in youth magazines: "It is taken for granted that the young people's magazines have a great influence in molding the character of youth. But the results of our inquiry show that the youngsters do not read them much. . . . On the whole, only one in ten reads Iunost', while even fewer read Moldaia gvardiia." T. Gromova and G. Ronina, "Senior Pupils After Class -- A Thousand Smolensk Pupils Talk About Their Free Time", KP, June 16, 1965, pp. 2-3; trans. in CDSP, XVIII: 31 (August 25, 1965), pp. 13-15.



science surveys in the "construction of communism". Party officials, however, continued to view sociology in terms of historical materialism.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, social scientists began to press for "concrete" research, that is, the use of surveys in concrete problems and case studies.<sup>26</sup> An authoritative article in Pravda reviewed this situation and urged the Party, as well as the Komsomol, to apply social research in their organizational work.<sup>27</sup> It was now apparent that there was considerable debate within the party and the scientific community concerning the question. By the end of 1965, the advocates of sociology had been successful and during 1966 sociology was established as a separate discipline. Numerous institutions and laboratories throughout the country were henceforth to be devoted to social research.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>F. Konstantinov and V. Kelle, "Istoricheskii materializm -- marksistskaia sotsiologiya", Kommunist, No. 1 (January, 1965), pp. 9-23; trans. in CDSP, XVII: 8 (March 17, 1965), pp. 3-9.

<sup>26</sup>See, for example, V. Shubkin, "O konkretnykh issledovaniakh sotsial'nykh protsessov", Kommunist, No. 3 (February, 1965), pp. 48-57; trans. in CDSP, XVII: 8 (May 19, 1965), pp. 15-18.

<sup>27</sup>E. Lisavtsev, V. Maslin, and N. Ovchinnikov, "Na nauchnoi osnove. Sotsial'nye issledovaniia v praktiku partiinoi raboty", Pravda, May 11, 1965, p. 2; trans. in CDSP, XVII: 19 (June 2, 1965), pp. 11-12.

<sup>28</sup>For a detailed treatment of the rise of sociology as a separate discipline in 1966, see George Fischer, "Sociology", Chapter 1 of Fischer et al., Science and Ideology in





The Institute of Public Opinion seems to have been forgotten in all this activity. Top Komsomol officials now focused their attention on the promotion of Komsomol activity within the Social Science Department of educational institutions.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the Institute of Public Opinion was now viewed as deplorably nonacademic: Soviet sociologists lamented its amateurish polls and called for more professional guidance.<sup>30</sup> The Komsomol press has been henceforth silent about its Institute, if, indeed, it still exists.

Surveys on youth have continued to expand in scope and size. Soviet sociologists have conducted numerous case studies on working conditions, working attitudes, and the use of leisure time, but by far the most popular has been the study of life-plans and aspirations of young workers and other youth.<sup>31</sup> The first, major, such study, in 1965,

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Soviet Society (New York: Atherton Press, 1967), pp. 7-11 especially. For an evaluation of the poor showing of Soviet sociology in the early 1960s, see L. Labedz, "Sociology as a Vocation", Survey, No. 48 (July, 1963), pp. 57-65.

<sup>29</sup>V. Orel, Head of the Komsomol Central Committee Student Section, and S. Muroshov, Head of the Administration of Social Science Instruction of the USSR Ministry of Higher and Specialized Education, "Student i obshchestvennye nauki", KP, April 20, 1966, pp. 1-2.

<sup>30</sup>See, for example, Iu. Karpov (Sociologist), and N. Iampolskaia (Komsomol apparatchik), "Neobkhodimost' ili moda? Sotsiologicheskie metody v komsomol'skoi rabote", KP, October 28, 1966, p. 2; trans. in CDSP, XVIII: 44 (November 23, 1966), pp. 14-40.

<sup>31</sup>Some examples are L. M. Arkhangelskii, and Iu. P.





was done by a leading sociologist, whose results pointed to frequent contradictions between young peoples' life-plans and what they were actually doing. He was frankly puzzled by the dilemma, but admitted that "to act, we must know".<sup>32</sup>

For the Komsomol, the significance of these studies lay in the recommendation that Komsomol organizations make use of life-plan studies in planning their activities so as to make work and activity plans "more closely related to the interests . . . of Komsomol members."<sup>33</sup> It was not clear, however, how this was to be accomplished or how the legitimate "interests" of Komsomol members was to be determined. A "scientific-theoretical" conference in 1967, entitled "Socialism and Youth", again reiterated that social science surveys were an absolute necessity, but again, no guidance was provided as to how the latter were to be used. A. M. Rumiantsev's address, for instance, called for applied research, but only hinted as to how it was to be applied:

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Petrov, "Zhiznennye plany i idealy shkol'noi molodezhi (po rezul'tatam etikosotsiologicheskikh issledovaniï)", Sovetskaia pedagogika, XXXI: 6 (June, 1967), pp. 68-76; and N. S. Mansurov, "Issledovaniia problem molodezhi v SSSR", Sovetskaia pedagogika, XXXI:12 (December, 1968), pp. 84-94; trans. in The Soviet Review, X: 4 (Winter, 1969/70), pp. 3-12. The latter article is a good general survey of research into youth problems in the Soviet Union.

<sup>32</sup>V. N. Shubkin, "Molodezh' vstupaet v zhizn'", Voprosy filosofii, XIX: 5 (May, 1965), pp. 57-70.

<sup>33</sup>Mansurov, op. cit., p. 88.



In order to solve scientifically the problem of 'Socialism and Youth', and to make practical recommendations for the Komsomol's everyday work, it is necessary first of all to draw a portrait of this young generation precisely and in detail. I think it is only such applied research, the unreservedly truthful explanation of the real state of affairs, that is an indispensable condition for successfully settling questions of the communist upbringing of young people.<sup>34</sup>

It soon became apparent, however, that social science research on youth problems was to be applied to improving ideological work. This point was strongly urged at the All-Union Conference of the Heads of Social Science Departments at Higher Educational Institutions by the Party and Komsomol officials attending.<sup>35</sup>

At present, the Komsomol is still very much involved with social science research. This involvement, however, is primarily in conjunction with professionals at universities, and is largely restricted to investigation of youth problems, which, in 1968, was being conducted in seventy Soviet cities.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>A. M. Rumiantsev, Vice-President of the USSR Academy of Sciences, "Vstupaiushchemu v mir nauki", KP, June 8, 1967, p. 3; trans. in CDSP, XIX: 30 (August 16, 1967), pp. 10-11 [my italics].

<sup>35</sup>"Vysokaia otvetstvennost' obshchestvovedov", Pravda, June 20, 1968, pp. 1-2; trans. as "Educate Specialists With High Ideological Convictions", CDSP, XX: 25 (July 10, 1968), pp. 8-10. The conference passed a resolution based on P. N. Demichev's report, "On Measures for Further Developing the Social Sciences and Intensifying Ideological Work at the Present Stage".

<sup>36</sup>Mansurov, op. cit., p. 84.



Whatever the fate of Komsomol'skaia pravda's Institute of Public Opinion, it had greatly stimulated the evolution of concrete research into youth problems.<sup>37</sup> Although its early polls suffered from both ignorance of methodology and official tampering, this did not detract from the significance it was granted by the Party. Perhaps this was the result of its success in supplementing agitprop efforts by mobilizing opinion to some extent. Its third poll, nevertheless, conducted just one year after its official establishment, revealed an awareness of some methodological sophistication, complete with computers and trained personnel. There seems little doubt that this poll was an experiment, whose success stimulated pressure for more sociological surveys; in short, Moscow had discovered the force that surveys could have and liked it.

In the process of demonstrating the validity of public opinion polls, the Institute of Public Opinion seems to have also indirectly promoted a slight, though significant, shift in their use. Polls were admittedly used in mobilizing opinion in order to stimulate a social consensus

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<sup>37</sup>In regard to public opinion research in the Soviet Union, and especially the early Komsomol'skaia pravda polls, see Rene Ahlberg, "Theorie der öffentlichen Meinung und empirische Meinungsforschung in der UdSSR", Osteuropa, 19 (March, 1969), pp. 161-172. For a comparison of Soviet opinion research with that in East Europe, see Emilia Wilder, "Opinion Polls", Survey, No. 48 (July, 1963), pp. 118-129.





and to illustrate "improper" attitudes. Soviet commentators tended to view opinion polls as having their most important role "in the establishment of a single norm of Communist social intercourse."<sup>38</sup> This point of view was certainly evidenced in the propaganda usage of certain desired characteristics -- such as the ten strong traits of Soviet youth, which were "surprisingly" similar to the principles of the subsequent moral code.<sup>39</sup> Yet the polls also showed that the "establishment of a single norm" had to take into account the individual life-plan of youth. This in itself led to research which would have to go beyond mere propaganda application. Although this did not mean that research would be free from ideological restrictions, it did imply that there were certain areas of social concern in which both ideological and personal goals would face some compromise.

The increase of case studies and of sociological research in general was one reflection of the regime's realization that concrete research was both useful and necessary, whether for social control, social mobilization, or as a measurement of social awareness. In the process of developing a separate discipline of sociology, the non-academic approach of the Institute of Public Opinion was

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<sup>38</sup>A. K. Uledov, Obshchestvennoe mnenie sovetskogo obshchestva (Moscow, 1963), p. 324.

<sup>39</sup>See above, p. 151.





bound to be condemned as nonprofessional. But it had broken the ground for further research. The recognition of youths' problems and the stimulation of research into the latter were but two of the many contributions it made to the present field of social science research on youth.

Although it is not clear how extensive the Komsomol will make use of the many surveys, there is at least official exhortation for the application of research to the problems of the Komsomol. This type of research will no doubt become increasingly significant in the day to day activities of the organization, despite its continuing link with ideology. The use of polls and the empirical approach to youth attitudes and problems may occasion one of the first significant departures in Komsomol "battlefield" techniques in years. Its ultimate significance must lie in the regime's conviction that the socialization process is neither a simple matter of organizational readjustment nor the reiteration of officially-promoted slogans. Perhaps the Institute of Public Opinion made its greatest contribution in demonstrating to the regime both the feasibility of social surveys in practical and propaganda usage and the level of sophistication required in dealing with the complex problems of modern youth.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The Komsomol Organization, established in the first year of Soviet rule, drew its origin from the Party's desire to create a channel through which it could influence and direct the natural enthusiasm of youth and enroll them in the building of a new society. The Party was at first reluctant to exert open control of the organization, for it felt that this would dampen its enthusiasm and destroy youthful initiative. Yet, in order to assure political allegiance, the Party felt it necessary to supervise and "guide" the organization's development. As with the Party, the freedom of debate and political role of its early years was replaced, during Stalin's rule, with subordination to central directives. In the process, although still an organization of youth, the Komsomol ceased to be an organization for youth: it existed for the Party.

The long-range goals of the organization were made explicit from the very beginning. The Komsomol was to be a training school for the future communist citizen. As such, it served an important recruiting function for the Communist Party.



Granted a monopoly over youth organizations, it sought to mold the political ideas of its membership and expose them to the desired values. Herein lay the basis of the regime's approach to socialization: it was to be achieved through organizational channels (which could be controlled by the Party); and it was to rely on outward pressures (didactic lecturing on political ideas, group pressure, examples of the "correct" social action). This approach stressed the situational stimuli of molding the new citizen and neglected psychological factors and inner motivation. In effect, socialization and civic education were one and the same.

The Komsomol's short-range goals (again imposed from above) required it to play various roles that changed with the differing requirements of the regime. Sometimes its role was educational or indoctrinational while at other times priority was given to economic tasks. Whatever its current assignment, whether social, political, or economic, its key function was that of mobilization. It mobilized youth for collectivization, industrialization, for propaganda in the countryside, for work in the Far East, for help in raising milk production, for every conceivable task, whether national, local, technical, or trivial. It was not always successful, but it was always involved, often enthusiastically.

The Komsomol's role in economic mobilization was no



doubt linked to the forced relinquishment of its political role. During the years of Stalin's rule, more emphasis was placed on the practical task of building an industrial nation through force, that is, by political means, than in inculcating a specific set of social values. Forced industrialization and the imposition of desired social values were in fact mutually reinforcing. The transformation of societal values was to be achieved through the transformation of the economic base of society. This, after all, was simple, basic, Marxist theory.

The Komsomol's role in socialization seemed most explicit in economic socialization, which was to be achieved through mobilization for economic tasks and by exposing the adolescent who was entering his assigned occupation to the correct and proper forms of behavior associated with his position. This function gained special significance after 1936, when the Komsomol was opened to the new class of technicians and professionals. It was now the Komsomol's task to provide not only good workers but also loyal professionals.

After 1936, the Komsomol rapidly grew into a mass organization. Because of its large size and its position as a stepping-stone for careerists (membership in the Komsomol was a prerequisite for university attendance and a good job), the organization soon faced the problem of





instilling enthusiasm into its own rank-and-file. The need to keep its membership in a perpetual state of mobilization was thus as important to the Komsomol as to the Party. The essence of the problem, however, lay in the conflict between the desire to maintain strict control from above and the goal of generating initiative at the local level.

With Stalin's death, youth, sensing a new era, pressed for more independence of action. The Komsomol, on the other hand, would not, and could not (so long as it was tied to the Party), modify either its internal structure or its goals.

To the Party, youth's rebelliousness was more an economic than a political problem. Youth, after all, was not rejecting communism: it was tired of sacrificing its present for promises of a bright future. The Soviet economy, however, could not meet youth's demands for more consumer goods. The regime still had to press on with industrial products, and it needed not only to combat youth's "consumer attitude toward socialism" but also to gain active support for another campaign of "belt-tightening". The Communist Labor Brigades, the Moral Code" of the builders of communism, the molding of the "new man", the anti-parasite campaigns, the stress on "production education" -- all of these were elements of an over-all effort to change youth's mind and to inculcate, through force, pressure, and persuasion, the desired qualities of the "communist



attitude toward labor". Although the methods used were of necessity more "sophisticated" than in the past, the channels through which they worked remained the same: organizational pressure through the Komsomol, mobilization campaigns, political indoctrination.

There is little doubt that the Komsomol has been very successful as a mobilization and recruitment agency. This is hardly surprising as it has the full support and resources of the Party to enforce its decisions. It seems likely that the Party, especially in the past, has considered it essential to saddle the Komsomol with various tasks requiring mobilization, possibly in the hope that, by keeping its membership constantly on the ready, the dynamism of the organization will be ensured.

The Komsomol's commitment to mobilization, however, pre-empts any potential it might have for interpreting and dealing with the underlying social problems of youth. It (and the Party) will continue to be caught unawares, as it was when faced with the problem of juvenile delinquency in the mid '60s, unless it shows some willingness to listen to the rumblings of its rank-and-file.

The shift in emphasis in the mid '60s may be an indication that the Party has realized that the integrative function of the Komsomol should be given priority. It may also be argued, however, that the economic debates in this period prompted the Party to de-emphasize the role of



non-professional groups in industry and that the Komsomol's role as a "production expediter" was therefore unnecessary and unwanted. If the role of the Komsomol is indeed linked to the success or failure of the economy, one can expect an inverse relationship between the strength of the economy and the extent of the Komsomol's involvement in stimulating production. The recent remobilization of the Komsomol for economic tasks, coming at a time when the economy is lagging, seems to indicate that the latter is the case.

Other developments, nevertheless, do signify that the regime at least recognizes the necessity of changing its approach to the methods of achieving conformity among youth. Increasing reliance, for instance, has now been placed upon the measurement of social problems through opinion polls and social science research. Whatever the importance attached to this development, the regime will not likely consider political education and economic mobilization to be, ipso facto, successful methods of socialization. This will not alter the Party's tight control over the Komsomol or change its long-range goals. It might, however, form the basis of a change in the Komsomol's approach to, and handling of, any future youth problem.





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- KP -- Komsomol'skaia pravda (Komsomol Truth) [Moscow].
- MK -- Molodoi kommunist (Young Communist) [Moscow].
- PoC -- Problems of Communism [Published in Washington by the United States Information Agency].
- RFE -- Radio Free Europe [News Circular from the Research Departments of Radio Free Europe].

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